Portraying Papua:

Activist representations of Indonesian Papua

1969 – 2009

George P. Darroch

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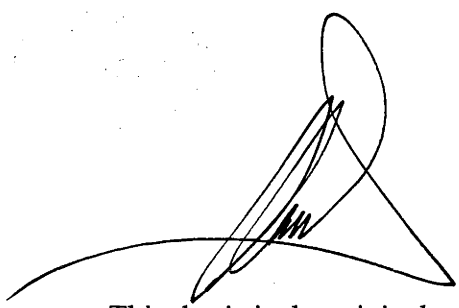

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George P. Darroch
Division of Pacific and Asian History
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
The Australian National University.

– Abstract –

This thesis examines the way in which Indonesian Papua has been represented by foreign activists between 1969 and 2009. It does so by looking at portrayals across a number of issues. Papuans have presented by foreign activists as categorically different to Indonesians. These differences have been seen as both racial and cultural and underpin a number of activist representations of Papuans.

This binary opposition has coloured activist interpretations and portrayals of violence, resource exploitation, and other forms of harm experienced by Papuans. These issues have also been represented in ways that reflect traumatic interpretations of history, and which consider the past as clearly affecting the present. Indonesia is considered to be the cause of Papuan suffering. Where, as with poverty and sickness, this binary has been more difficult to sustain there has been less attention from foreign activists. This thesis concludes with a comment on the limited conditions under which knowledge about Papua is produced, and how limitations on foreign activists have served to create a particular image of Papua.

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– Introduction –

Examining representation

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how foreign activists have portrayed Papua. My aim in writing this thesis has been to explore how a complex situation with human rights implications has been understood and represented, and to understand why particular issues gain attention while others receive comparatively little. I have also sought to explain why particular ways of describing Papua have predominated.

My initial framing of the topic came from a provocative question posed by Edward Aspinall: "If a concern for human rights is the main motivation, why do so many supporters of Papuan human rights show so little interest in human rights issues elsewhere in Indonesia?".[1] My initial research question was posed as a comparative examination of foreign activism on both Aceh and Papua, and an attempt to explain

[1] Edward Aspinall, "Selective Outrage and Unacknowledged Fantasies: Re-thinking Papua, Indonesia and Australia," (*Nautilus Institute at RMIT*, May 4, 2006). http://www.nautilus.org/~rmit/forum-reports/0615a-aspinall.html

why despite both being the subject of significant human rights violations these two regions generated considerably different responses in from foreign activists. As a matter of practicality it has been necessary to focus solely on Papua, in order to do justice to the complexities of the situation. This has also allowed me to more fully explain why particular representations have come to dominate the global image of Papua.

I have addressed these questions by looking at the way the foreign Papua movement has represented the territory across a number of issues.

Papuans are presented by foreign activists as categorically different to Indonesians. This difference is seen as both racial and cultural and underpins a number of activist representations of Papuans. The 'foreign Papua movement' has frequently expressed an understanding of Papuans as a group categorically separated from the rest of Indonesia, rather than existing within the Indonesian archipelago.

Foreign activists frequently understand Papua in binary and opposing terms. This colours their interpretations and portrayals of Papua and the violence, resource exploitation, and other forms of suffering experienced. Where this is not so clearly the case, as with poverty and sickness, there has been less attention from foreign activists.

Locating 'Papua'

In this thesis, I use the term Papua to describe the Western half of the island of New Guinea.[2] This term covers both Papua Province and West Papua Province collectively. Where it is necessary to distinguish these provinces directly, the terms Papua Province and West Papua Province are used. The naming of the province is an area of contestation, and names have themselves been politicised. Foreign activists now almost universally use the term 'West Papua' (*Papua Barat*) to describe the territory in question, but other terms have predominated or been common in the past. Michael Cookson describes these as follows: "Netherlands/Dutch New Guinea (*Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea*), West Irian (*Irian Barat*), West Papua (*Papua Barat*), West New Guinea, Irian Jaya, Papua *and* West Irian Jaya (*Irian Jaya Barat*) and most recently Papua *and* West Papua (*Papua Barat*)."[3] Where these historic terms have been used in titles or in direct quotes I have reproduced them. Otherwise I use the term 'Papua' throughout. I use the term Indonesia to refer to the Indonesian Government.

Papua is located geographically on the eastern edge of Indonesia. As a result of its distance from Java and Sumatra, it is one of the more isolated provinces in Indonesia. However, despite its isolation, it is considered highly important within Indonesia. This

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2 For discussion of the history of naming Papua, and its implications, see; M. Cookson, "Batik Irian: Imprints of Indonesian Papua" (Unpublished PhD, Australian National University 2008), 21-22, http://www.papuaweb.org/dlib/s123/cookson/_phd.pdf.

3 Ibid., 21.

is because of its place in the anti-colonial struggle against the Dutch, and continued efforts at separation. The history of Papua is contested, and I discuss this at greater length in later chapters: however, here it is sufficient to note that as a result of this history it holds an important place within the national imagination.

I also use the term Papuan in specific ways, which by necessity exclude other interpretations. 'Papuan' is used to describe both indigenous Papuans and non-indigenous residents of Papua who have thoroughly naturalised and are considered to be Papuans by indigenous Papuans. Indonesian is used to describe non-Papuan outsiders (*pendatang* lit. "immigrants") from other parts of the archipelago. I have largely refrained from using quotation marks around these terms, except where necessary to add emphasis or indicate a term has been used ('term'), or to indicate a direct quotation ("term").[4]

Limitations on access

This thesis has been shaped in ways by the limitations placed on me, and chief among these has been the inability to access Papua directly. This has been a common problem encountered by those wishing to study Papua, particularly since the early 2000s.

[4] I follow here Gouda in commenting that using quotation marks to denote that the terms used to describe categories of identity could imply that I do not find their use unproblematic. However this could mean putting quotation marks around all such terms used in the text. "Not wanting to mar the page with an endless series of quotation marks" I have limited their use See; F. Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995). 270 n8.

Research on issues that are considered potentially contentious or having political implications is highly restricted, and during the period in which I researched most researchers I talked to considered their access to be denied.. After a short period of almost unrestricted research access following the collapse of the New Order regime, access has again been restricted heavily, to the extent that the comment has been made that it is often more difficult to access Papua presently than it was 15 years ago.[5]

Researchers who have attempted to study human rights in Papua have encountered particular difficulties. As noted above, access to Papua to research sensitive topics is highly restricted, and the study of human rights particularly so. Most commonly researchers have been blocked from undertaking such research. [6] Those who have been allowed access have in some cases been expelled from Papua, or prevented from actually accessing Papua.[7] Despite these challenges, there have been visits by external researchers. Many of these have been by students and academics whose research has changed focus after interaction with their interlocutors in Papua is and now considered problematic by Indonesian authorities.[8] The organisation Human Rights Watch has been able to conduct limited research by using local researchers, as have other organisations. Reliable research from within Papua is circumscribed. The human rights

[5]Pers comm., Anon August 2008.
[6]A. Varshney, M. Z. Tadjoeddin, and R. Panggabean, "Creating Datasets in Information-Poor Environments: Patterns of Collective Violence in Indonesia, 1990-2003," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8, no. 3 (2008): 361-394.
[7] These include most academics working on Papua at the moment. A small number are trusted to conduct research within Papua.
[8]One such example is Eben Kirksey, who began his research into an anthropology of food among the Me, and has since examined indigenous Papuan political responses to Indonesia.S. E. Kirksey, "From Cannibal to Terrorist: State Violence, Indigenous Resistance and Representation in West Papua" (Unpublished M.Phil, University of Oxford, 2002), http://bakti.easternindonesia.org/gsdl/collect/pdf/index/assoc/HASHc228.dir/doc.pdf.

organisation ELSHAM (*Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Hak Asasi Manusia*, Institute for Study and Advocacy of Human Rights) was for most of the 1990s and much of the 2000s a leading source of information from within Papua. However, since its founder John Rumbiak had a stroke, and after his successor Paula Makabory fled threats against her, ELSHAM's ability to provide information has been limited.

As a result of my inability to access Papua, I have not conducted a direct investigation on any aspect of human rights. Instead, I have decided to examine the ways in which human rights are discussed and the ways in which they are represented by the foreign Papua movement.

Thesis structure

The first chapter shows how Papuans have been portrayed by activists in racial terms. In this chapter, I discuss how Papuans have been described as having particular racial characteristics, and how this has been used to portray them as significantly different from other Indonesians. This difference has then been used to signify that the presence of other Indonesians in Papua is harmful, and that there should thus be a separate Papuan nation. This difference, between 'Melanesian' and 'Malay' is seen as a natural one, which is both visibly self-evident and supported by scientific categories. In this chapter I explore the extent to which these claims about identity result from natural difference, and how these statements are given weight by their association with political concepts.

The second chapter explores representations of violence and history. Papua's history within Indonesia is characterised by activists as a particularly violent one. Little is known by activist of the violence that occurred between 1976 and 1984. As a result, this period is generally understood by activists as one in which great violence occurred. Portrayals of these events and of violence in the present day invoke genocide and great suffering. In this chapter I argue that these representations are the result of Papuan trauma, often described as *memoria passionis* – memory of suffering. Papua's history is also portrayed in ways that promote a straightforward and unproblematic national history. This chapter examines how these histories are represented outside of Papua.

The next chapter looks at resource exploitation, and how Papuans are described as the victims of development and loss of their natural environment and resources. In this chapter I look at the way in which Papuans have been described as part of their natural environment. Western ideas about biodiversity have been imposed on a Papuan framework. Development has been portrayed as harmful to Papuan lifestyles. This is particularly the case with foreign companies, and the most important example has been Freeport McMoRan. Where Papuans have embraced development or shown ambivalence, they have been left aside.

The fifth chapter examines how poverty and sickness are used as rights issues. These issues have received comparatively little attention. In this chapter I write that this is

because they fall outside a number of key framings of Papuan issues. It is difficult to assign blame directly to the Indonesian Government for poverty and ill health. These issues also largely lack the kind of imagery that is most useful to the campaigns of foreign activists. Where disease is portrayed it has been framed in terms of violence and trauma.

Locating myself within the academic field.

With this thesis I draw heavily on the work of previous academics who have considered Papua.[9] I use their writing to inform my work, and to contextualise and deconstruct the portrayals of Papua by the foreign activist movement.

I have considered academic literature written by those who are explicitly sympathetic to Papuan independence as both; information on Papua, and where appropriate as material emanating from the foreign Papua movement.[10]

While much academic work has been done on the subject of Papua, particularly on the independence movement and Papuan history, little of this work has considered directly

[9] For example; on the subject of Papuan history I have drawn heavily from Richard Chauvel, on descriptions of race and mining from Chris Ballard, and for health in Papua ,from Leslie Butt.

[10] 'Activist academics' considered in this thesis include; Abigail Walton, David Webster, Peter King, Jim Elsmlie, Tom Hyndman, John Saltford, and Greg Poulgrain. All of these have published on the subject of Papua and maintained a close affinity to elements of the activist movement. In practice such a line can be difficult to draw – all academics writing on Papua have opinions on the subject. Nevertheless, where I have made such distinctions where I consider them clear.

how foreigners have represented Papua and Papuans in the late 20th Century.[11] In this thesis I examine these representations, and particularly consider how rights and difference have been presented by foreigners to the outside world.

Who are the activists?

In this thesis I consider the 'foreign Papua movement', which I define as foreign activists who have represented Papua to the outside world. The foreign activist movement for Papua has existed since the mid-1960s in various forms. Early forms of this movement took the shape of individuals who were concerned to portray what they saw as a negative situation in Papua.[12] These early activists were also strongly supportive of Papuan independence from Indonesia. They saw Indonesia as imposing on the self-determination and development of the Papuan people. During the 1970s and early 1980s Papua received comparatively little attention from foreigners.[13] Throughout this period a small number of groups and individuals campaigned on Papuan issues. While these groups were support for native aspirations to human rights and independence, there was relatively little activity during this period. Between 1977

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11 On this subject, see particularly: Cookson, "Batik Irian: Imprints of Indonesian Papua."

12 A. Lijphart, *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea* (New Haven:, 1966); P.A. Szudek, *New Guinea: Danger Zone 1969* (London, 1968); P. W. Van der Veur, *West Irian's Refugees: What is "Permissive Residence"?* (Sydney 1966).

13 Works from this period included: Wyn Sargent, *People of the Valley* (London:, 1976); N. Sharp, *The Rule of the Sword: The Story of West Irian* (Melbourne:, 1977); K. Lagerberg, *West Irian and Jakarta Imperialism* (London, 1979); Keith Suter, *West Irian, East Timor, and Indonesia*, vol. 42, Minority Rights Group (London: 1979); Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *West Papua : the Obliteration of a people*, 1st ed. (Surrey, UK: 1983). The *Tapol Bulletin* and *Inside Indonesia* were both highly critical of the Suharto-era 'New Order' Indonesian Government and increasingly featured regular articles about Papua during this period.

and 1984 saw the province largely closed to foreigners, and these years were later seen as ones of great violence.

International attention to Papua was revived in 1984, as the result of the movement of 10,000 refugees across the border from West Papua in Indonesia into Papua New Guinea. This refugee crisis helped raise the profile of West Papua within Australia and elsewhere, and gained considerable attention. This created a temporary increase in activism, which was sustained throughout the 1980s, by groups such as the British based Tapol.[14] During this period representations of Papua focussed on violence committed by the Indonesian military, economic exploitation, and other forms of suffering. There was also strong support for Papuan independence.

Scattered groups of activists existed during the early 1990s, including the Australian West Papua Association, but these groups had a low profile and small membership. There was a greater emphasis by activists on Papuan status as indigenous people, and increased attention to environmental issues during this period. There was a corresponding decrease in emphasis on the armed *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Free Papua Movement), and a shift towards portraying Papuans as victims and as 'natural'. I discuss these shifts in representation further in chapters 2 and 3. The issue of West Papua again received international attention in 1995 with the publication of a report on

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[14] Particularly: Robin Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War: The Guerrilla Struggle in Irian Jaya* (Sydney:, 1985); Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *West Papua: the Obliteration of a People*, 2nd and 3rd eds.

Newspaper coverage of the refugee crisis in Australia was significant, and the issue captured academic attention (see the edited volume: RJ May, *Between Two Nations: The Indonesia-Papua New Guinea Border and West Papua Nationalism*. (Bathurst, NSW:, 1986).

Indonesian violence at Freeport's Grasberg mine.[15] This spurred international activism for several years afterwards, and revived attention to violence against Papuans. It also brought to the forefront attention to environmental issues within Papua.

The modern West Papua movement developed during the late 1990s. This activism was strengthened by the fall of the military dominated New Order regime in 1998. The foreign movement during the late 1990s and early 2000s considered that imminent independence was a strong possibility, and was buoyed by this prospect.

A coherent Papua movement exists, which I define as the groups and individuals who participate in the reg.westpapua mailing list,[16] and in regular international meetings of the West Papua movement. The activists I have studied, interviewed, and otherwise engaged with are based outside of Papua. Major groups include: the various affiliates of the Australian West Papua Association,[17] Tapol,[18] the Canadian group WestPAN,[19] New Zealand's Indonesian Human Rights Committee,[20] the USA based ETAN,[21] the

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15 Anonymous (prepared for publication by Pat Walsh), *Trouble At Freeport: A Report of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid - Eyewitness accounts of West Papuan resistance to the Freeport-McMoRan mine in Irian Jaya (West Papua), Indonesia and Indonesian military repression: June 1994 - February 1995* (Melbourne: 1995).

16 This list is maintained by the organisation Tapol, and is an open membership list. Postings largely consist of news items, with occasional commentary and discussion. It can be accessed at: https://lists.riseup.net/www/arc/reg.westpapua

17 See: Australian West Papua Association (Western Australia), "Australia West Papua Association-WA," http://www.awpawa.org/; Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), "Australia West Papua Association Sydney," http://www.zulenet.com/awpa/; Australian West Papua Association (South Australia), "Australia West Papua Association SA Inc," http://www.awpa-sa.org.au/.

18 Tapol, "Tapol Home," http://tapol.gn.apc.org/.

19 "WestPAN: Canada's West Papua Action Network," http://www.westpapua.ca/.

20 "Indonesian Human Rights Committee," http://www.ihrc.revolt.org/.

21 ETAN, "ETAN - East Timor & Indonesia Action Network; East Timor Action Network," http://www.etan.org/.

Forum for Peoples Close to Nature,[22] and Down to Earth.[23] Church and missionary groups and their members have also formed part of this movement, and I have also studied advocacy from independent activists, and student groups. Organisations that engage with Papua but do not take a position on Papuan independence do not form the core of my research. These organisations do not form a part of the movement I have decided to focus on. Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are however used by activists as sources of authoritative knowledge about rights and suffering.[24]

The Papua movement activists whose works are addressed in this work are almost exclusively sympathetic to the idea of Papuan independence. Their writing on Papuan issues relates to this independence movement. For these activists it is self-evident that Papuans want to be independent, and that their independence will see a significant improvement in the conditions under which Papuans live. Their consideration of issues such as health and poverty is framed in such a way as to present high levels of HIV infection, for example, as the result of the incorporation of West Papua into the Indonesian nation state.

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22 "fPcN interCultural: friends of Peoples close to Nature," http://www.fpcn-global.org/.

23 Down to Earth, "Down to Earth, International Campaign for Ecological Justice in Indonesia," http://dte.gn.apc.org/.

24 Human Rights Watch reports on Papua have been considered particularly valuable as statements about rights in Papua. Amnesty International's ongoing campaign for Filep Karma and Yusak Pakage as prisoners of conscience, and occasional reports on violence in Papua have also been used in validatory ways by members of the activist movement. Amnesty International's reputation for neutrality is seen as underlining the status of these claims. Amnesty International is frequently invoked as endorsing a figure of 100,000 killed, although no evidence exists that Amnesty International has done so.

Their interpretations of Papua are framed within this context. This understanding results from their close contact with exiled Papuans and with activists and members of the Papuan independence movement living within Papua. They take guidance from these Papuans, and this gives them confidence in the correctness of the positions they take. Most of these Papuans are strongly in favour of Papuan independence. These Papuans express strong support for the idea of *merdeka.* The idea of contains a number of possible meanings. *Merdeka* is frequently translated as freedom, but how this idea of freedom is interpreted is contested. It is most frequently used by foreign activists as synonymous with independence.

In this thesis I have consciously limited my description to exclude representations of Papua by Papuans in exile. I have similarly avoided self-representation by Papuans living within Papua. My reason for doing so is because I am interested to see how the world looking in towards Papua has understood the territory.

All of these activist groups are sincere in their wish to improve conditions within Papua, and to prevent a repeat of past violence. They see themselves as working towards a peaceful Papua free of violence, and military oppression. They also wish to see Papuans able to express themselves freely politically, and to see an improvement in the material living conditions of Papuans.

Activist sources on Papua

Out of this movement has emerged a range of literature. This literature consists of a number of books, pamphlets, websites, films, television and radio interviews, letters to the editor, and other advocacy material.

There is a core canon of works; approximately eight books that are considered particularly authoritative within the movement and which have been particularly influential. These works are given their authority within the movement by virtue of their authorship. Their authors have visited Papua and have been active in promoting the Papuan cause. My interviewees frequently mentioned these works as important sources of knowledge during the 1980s and 1990s when limited information on Papua was available. As result of their centrality to the movement, I have considered these works in particular detail, and drawn extensively from them as sources portraying Papua.

I have also incorporated the other forms of advocacy material above into my analysis of activist portrayals of Papua. To contextualise these works I have drawn from outside the activist literature, considering non-activist works that have been read and cited as sources by foreign activists. In 2008 I conducted a number of interviews with present and former activists. These interviews helped me gain a clearer insight into how activists have understood Papua. The interviews also made clearer the intent of activists in their representations of Papua.

Contextualising my research

My involvement with this topic informs how I see Papua, and those who talk about it. All researchers are in some way influenced by their relation with their research subject, however my relations with those I study have been sufficiently close that contextualising my research in an explicit way is both necessary and productive.

My first direct knowledge of Papua as more than an abstract entity came in 2004, when I was the member of a peace group based in Wellington, New Zealand. The group regularly took on foreign policy issues, and the presence of a small number of Acehnese within the organisation meant that its focus included examining the violence that was then occurring in Aceh, due to ongoing conflict between the Indonesian military (TNI, *Tentara Nasional Indonesia*)and the organisation known as GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, Free Aceh Movement).[25] While the subject of Papua was never a key focus of the peace group, it was mentioned as a place where dark human rights abuses occurred at the hands of the Indonesian military. In early 2006 I returned to Wellington to undertake an honours degree, and was required as part of coursework to examine 'civil society' in a particular form. I looked at both Papuan and foreign organisations working within Papua, and examined how they operated within the particular environment that characterises Papua. However, this approach had

[25] For an overview of this now apparently resolved conflict, see: E. F. Drexler, *Aceh, Indonesia: Securing the Insecure State* (Philadephia, 2008); Leslie McCulloch, *Aceh: Then and now* (London:, 2005); Matthew Davies, *Indonesia's War Over Aceh: Last Stand on Mecca's Porch*, Politics in Asia Series (London, New York: 2006).

limitations; I was reliant on a small number of works and internet pages, had little access to Papuans themselves, and comment on my thoughts and work was limited in the most part to those who had even less grasp of Papua.

During the year I became involved with the Indonesian Human Rights Committee, which focussed its attention on issues within Indonesia, including Papua. The organisation sponsored the visit of Socratez Yoman; the leader of the Papuan Baptist Church, and later sponsored me to visit the 2006 "Sixth International Solidarity Meeting on West Papua", held at Lake Cowichan, British Columbia, Canada.[26]

This direct interaction with the foreign Papua movement was extremely useful for informing my research. It gave me insight into how Papua was understood by my research subjects, and the reasons for their representations of Papua. My contact with these activists also gives me a particular responsibility to portray their work and intentions accurately. Although not all activists are likely to agree with my conclusions, I hope that this work will be seen as useful to informing debate about Papua.

Introducing my argument.

[26] Tapol, "Solidarity meeting in Vancouver," *Tapol Bulletin*, http://tapol.gn.apc.org/bulletin/2006/Bull184.htm#meeting.

The main argument in this thesis has a number of components. Firstly, that Papuan identity is understood by foreign activists as being in resistance to Indonesia. Papuans are portrayed in ways that emphasise opposition to Indonesia. Following from this, I make the argument that Papuan identity is tied to suffering by activists.
This portrayal takes the form of idealised narratives in areas such as environmental destruction. These representations are easily utilised by activists in the service of Papuan independence. However, portrayals have been difficult for foreign activists in areas in which rights are more heavily contested. These subjects cannot be easily utilised by the foreign Papua movement to emphasise difference and support independence.

The discourses activists operate within are constrained by what is 'known'; a collection of shared understandings (worldviews) of Papua. These worldviews very often operate by imagining an *idealised* Papua. These are seen most obviously in the naturalisation of Papuans, in which Papuans are presented in ways that place them close to nature, and portrayed in romantic ways which downplay or ignore problematic parts of traditional existence.

This positive idealisation stands out against a similarly negatively idealised Indonesia. While this is not intended as form of dehumanisation, the end effect is to remove the agency of Papuans, and to cast actions which see Papuans adopt forms of modernity, or act as part of the developmentalist state; as inauthentic, or worse – coopted by the state to act against their interests.

– Chapter 1 –

Questions of Race

In this chapter I discuss how the foreign activist movement has attributed a specific set of racial characteristics to Papuans, and how Papuans have been categorised as distinctively different to Indonesian Malays. The difference implied in this characterisation is seen as a natural one, resulting from supposedly self evident and scientifically established differences in categories. This difference has then been used to imply that Papua and Papuans are diminished or negatively impacted by the presence of Indonesians; and that there should thus be a separate Papuan nation. However, these claims are much more a result of political constructions which are used to back claims about identity, than reflective of real differences on the ground.

A separate race

The very first words of *West Papua: the Obliteration of a People* identify Papuans as follows:

> The people of West Papua are Melanesians, of the same ethnic origin as the people who inhabit the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and the Pacific Islands to the east.[27]

This sentence sets the tone for the entire work. Similar introductions mark the beginning of another of the most significant secondary works from the 1980s, *Indonesia's Secret War* by Robin Osborne.

> About 50,000 years ago, during the last 'ice-age', seaborne migrants from Asia began arriving in the place which is now called New Guinea .... There were three broad races of immigrant peoples, Negritos, Papuans and Melanesians.[28]

These claims, and others like them, mark out Papua as a racially defined area, in which a particular set of peoples are present. These claims are very widespread in activist literature and publications,[29] which follow Budiarjo and Liong, and Osborne in foregrounding difference as a given. This has the effect of contextualising the reader's interpretation of the entire work, by emphasising Papuan difference as the key frame through which issues should be read.

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27 Budiardjo and Liong, *West Papua: the Obliteration of a People*, 1.

28 Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War* 1.

29 An exhaustive list would include most activist publications on Papua since 1969, See for example; Szudek, *New Guinea: Danger Zone 1969*, 8-9; Anti-Slavery Society. *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise. Indigenous Peoples and Development Series Report No. 6.* (London 1990). 9; Butt, L., D. Webster. "Why West Papua Matters Today." *Tok Blong Pasifik*, (Victoria, British Columbia October 2001) 1; Australian West Papua Association. *West Papua: an Issue Who's Time has Come.* (Melbourne 2006)

After his initial statements, Osborne goes on to ascribe the use of the term 'Melanesian' to Dumont d'Urville, who used this term to describe what he saw as a black race.[30] The claim of a distinct Melanesian race is later complicated by Osborne with the statement that the wide variation in appearance among Papuans renders their conflation into a single race as 'simplistic'. He nevertheless claims that such categories as Melanesian and Papuan can be sustained without difficulty.[31] Papuan identity as Melanesian is seen to be self-evident, as revealed by their appearance, and lifestyle. The 'self-evidence' of Papuanness parallels that of previous descriptions made by British explorers who emphasised race and difference, both within Papua.[32] The racial dichotomy is employed widely by activists, across a wide range of arenas. Frizzy haired 'Melanesians' are separated from their straight haired Maluku neighbours and the multi-shaded *adat*/traditional/indigenes of the rest of the archipelago, and declared 'Papuan' on the basis of their physiognomy. To declare that the West Papua movement has invented this claim is to go too far. Rather, they have utilised an already conceptualised entrenched racial dichotomy. Later in this chapter I discuss how activists and indigenous Papuans have adopted and reinterpreted these pre-existing categories.

A place apart

30 Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War*. 1-2; for context for d'Urville's classifications, see the special issue of the *Journal of Pacific History* 38, no. 2, edited by Geoffrey Clark.

31 Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War*.1-2

32 See for comparison: Ballard, "'Oceanic Negroes': British anthropology of Papuans, 1820-1869."

Jim Elmslie writes that "for thousands of years the Melanesians who lived [in New Guinea] were virtually unaffected by the rest of humanity".[33] This statement implies that the ethnicity of Papuans is obvious, and makes the claim that this is a result of their lack of contact with outsiders. He also places a positive value on their isolation, contrasting their being "left largely alone" with "'development'... at the expense of the indigenes". This linking of outside contact and environmental destruction and the development of Papuans is a significant theme widely evident in other activist literature, and it is explored here in chapters (Three and Four). In Mark Worth's 2003 film *Land of the Morning Star*,[34] an understanding of Papuans as racially different from their surrounding islands is said to date from the arrival of Moluccan traders and slave hunters in the 16th century.[35] The film makes the statement that contact with external, non-Papuan was limited until the early and mid-20th century. This enables racial categories to be more sharply drawn.

The idea that Papuans have been separated from the world for long periods of time is used by activists to strengthen their claims about racial difference. The strategic use of time has been used as a tactic to emphasise indigeneity elsewhere, for example among indigenous advocates in North America.[36] Giving weight to the physical separation of an indigenous people as well as their temporal separation emphasises difference. The

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33 J. Elmslie, *Irian Jaya Under the Gun: Indonesian Economic Development Versus West Papuan Nationalism* (Honolulu, 2001), 6.

34 Mark Worth, *Land of the Morning Star* (Sydney, 2003).

35 Ibid.

36 Biolsi, Thomas. "Imagined Geographies: Sovereignty, indigenous space, and American Indian struggle." *American Anthropologist* 32, no. 2 (2005). :239

significance given to temporal separation in these excerpts is shared with a large number of other West Papua activist materials.

In the introduction to his 1968 book *West Irian and Jakarta Imperialism*, Kees Lagerfield wrote that

> the Negrito-Melanesian population, [of West Papua]... cannibalistic, headhunting tribes of the coastal plains prevented mongoloid invasions. Even the fauna from the Asian continent did not penetrate the New Guinea jungle[37]

This quote reflects a widespread view that encroachments into Papua cause the despoiling of a pristine place. This view rests on the assumptions that contact was and is harmful, and that Dutch contact was limited. To this end, incursions by Europeans or others are introduced as 'invasions' or 'intrusions', conducted by 'foreign predators'. However, the limited nature of European contacts has meant these are seen as much less intrusive.

The Dutch colonial experience in Papua was circumscribed for a number of reasons. These included: difficulties caused by climate and landscape, relations with Papuans themselves, a fear of danger and a lack of desire to explore the interior. Movement around the island by the Dutch tended to be expeditionary in nature, with trips by explorers, naturalists, biologists and anthropologists to investigate the interior, but not

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[37] Lagerberg, *West Irian and Jakarta Imperialism* 9.

to colonise it in any meaningful way. For this reason, at the end of the Dutch period, the interior was still a largely unknown entity, characterised in mysterious and often hostile terms. This has allowed activists to contrast the Dutch presence, which is largely viewed as a benign form of colonialism that sought to control territory, with the Indonesian presence, which is viewed as much more severe and seeking to control populations.

Most members of the Australian West Papua Association, the section of the West Papua movement I have had the most contact with, are consistent in their assurances that they are concerned not to vilify Indonesians, but rather to confront the Indonesian state. However this distinction is at times a difficult one to maintain, and not one that all individuals take care to adhere to. On a number of occasions critics of Indonesia's presence in West Papua have attacked the idea of Indonesians being in West Papua itself – on the grounds that their presence was an alien intrusion into the land and a form of harm. Many of my interviewees have expressed the idea that Papua is dominated by 'Java' and 'Javanese', and that Indonesia is a 'Javanese empire' rather than a multi-ethnic nation. This view is of Indonesia as a "Jakarta regime", based around Java and operated by 'Asians'.[38]

Liz Thompson, in her book *West Papua: Follow the Morning Star*, describes Jayapura as "a strange assault on the senses" when compared to Papua's interior, being filled

[38] Robin Osborne, "Irian Jaya: Two ways of saying Indonesia go home," *Inside Indonesia* (July 1984): 11.

with sights, smells and sounds that represent the world outside Papua.[39] The book presents these words alongside pictures of poverty, linking the arrival of immigrants to images that are seen as a corruption of Papua. In this picturing of the province, the presence of 'Asians', 'Malays', 'Javanese' or 'Indonesians' is an invasion and despoiling of an untouched and beautiful land that is set apart.

A Papuan man contrasted against an Indonesian, as illustrated in *West Papua: Follow the Morning Star*, p75. Photo credit Jim Elmslie.

Naturalising Papuans

[39] Ben Bohane, Liz Thompson, and Jim Elmslie, *West Papua: Follow the Morning Star* (Melbourne: 2003).

The introduction to the 1968 book '*Under the Mountain Wall*'[40] describes the natural beauty of Dani lands as stunning wilderness. Representations of Papuans in both the popular and activist literature are firmly and consistently of natural, 'unspoiled' wilderness. Works from the 1960s and 1970s tended to emphasise the naturalness of the region. The impact of this on representations of Papua has been significant (see later discussion, Chapter Four), and has helped underscore the way in which Papua been set apart as special in the understanding of activists.

This use of nature as an ethnic and geographic marker works not only to underline Western interpretations of Papuans as different, but also to establish Papuans as people 'of nature'. These portrayals establish an 'authentic' Papua, which is pure and unadulterated and give the readers, as developed people of European extraction, "a glimpse into the origins of all our humanity".[41] In the *West Papua Information Kit*, Papuans are designated as being in a special relationship with the land.[42] While this might be at least partly true, especially for those in the highlands engaged in agriculture, by its emphasis it serves to underline Papuan primitivity as a central part of their identity, and as a central part of their reason for needing outside support. As shown above, this image is not an isolated one. This naturalistic interpretation accords with images of indigenous Papuans as 'people close to nature'. This idea is maintained

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40 P. Matthiessen, *Under the Mountain Wall: A Chronicle of Two Seasons in the Stone Age* (London, 1962). This anthropological representation of Dani life was highly influential as a representation of 'authentic' Papua, and forms a part of the 'further reading' sections of a number of books from the 1970s.

41 T. Groome, *Arrows against the Wind* (One World Films, 1992).

42 Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), *West Papua Information Kit: revised 1998 with focus on Freeport* (Sydney: 1997).

for example by the Forum for Peoples Close to Nature,[43] for whom Papuan tribes are held to deserve international support for their non-developed ways of life.

This description of Papuans as indigenous has not come entirely from the outside however. Tanya Murray Li writes that the self-ascription of indigeneity is not "natural or inevitable, but neither is it simply invented, adopted, or imposed. It is, rather, a *positioning*" in relation to the state and instruments of power, "which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle".[44] Identification among Papuans as indigenous has provided them with access to international forums for solidarity. This was seen in the 1980s and 1990s when Papuans in exile made contact with indigenous groups including the World Council of Indigenous Peoples.[45]

However, identification as indigenous can have the effect of marginalising Papuans, because 'indigeneity', and the forms of thought and action which it implies, currently exist outside the space in which dominant cultures are based. By doing so it may have the effect of removing Papuans from the framework of politics, and instead place them within what is perceived to be a separate 'indigenous' space, which is marginal to the capitals of most nations, both small and large. However, these considerations are not often addressed by members of the foreign Papua activist movement, which has

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43 "These [indigenous] are first and are the last societies on Earth to have a non-exploitative relationship with the natural world." friends of Peoples close to Nature, "Our Ethos: fPcN interCultural:," 2009, http://www.fpcn-global.org/content/Our-Ethos.

44 T. Murray Li, "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 01 (2000): 151.

45 Robin Osborne, "The flag that won't go away," *Inside Indonesia* (1985): 29.

internalised within its members a strong identification with marginalised indigenous peoples throughout the world. Many of the prominent activists within the movement have also been active within, or expressed considerable solidarity towards, other indigenous movements. This solidarity was also expressed through the pan-Melanesian movement from the 1970s onwards.

This portrayal of Papuans as close to nature is particularly important in environmentally focused activism engaged in by these groups, which I discuss in Chapter Three of this thesis. It is also useful in creating a perception of Papuans which renders them as passive victims of a harsh colonisation.

A uniform identity

Christianity also serves as a marker of pan-Melanesian identity,[46] and reinforces claims that Papuans are separate from the rest of Indonesia. Christianity functions as a source of shared identity among many Papuans. Assertions of difference by foreign activists have frequently mentioned religious difference, and stressed the Christian practice of a majority of Papuans, *vis-a-vis* the Muslim majority in Indonesia. However, making this claim about Christianity as a Melanesian or Papuan religion ignores the longstanding presence of Islam in Papua, and a number of more recent conversions to Islam.[47] Islam

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46 B. Douglas, *Weak states and other nationalisms: emerging Melanesian paradigms?*, State Society and Governance in Melanesia (Canberra: 2000): 5.

47 Farhadian is unclear about how many conversions have occurred, but claims "a good number" of Papuans have converted in recent decades; Charles E. Farhadian, *Christianity, Islam and Nationalism in Indonesia* (London and New York:,2005), 82-83.

is strongest in coastal regions of Papua such as Fak Fak,[48] where conversions to Islam have been the result of historic evangelisation. This is particularly so in the areas bordering Maluku,[49] home of the Sultanate of Tidore. A significant history of religious contact exists in coastal regions.[50]

Susanna Rizzo describes West Papua's place in the region as positioned on the border of a Mediterranean-like archipelago, and as a "'Melanesian appendix' of South-East Asia".[51] Rather than being separated by ocean, coastal communities throughout the archipelago and along the Papuan coast maintained high levels of contact. Epeli Hau'ofa has described how the seas of Melanesia and Polynesia have been performed the role of highways, and that rather it has been Europeans since the 19th century who have conceptualised them as barriers and imposed this interpretation on the Pacific.[52]

Rizzo emphasises that since incorporation into Indonesia, West Papua's history has been placed within the 'Malay world' rather than a 'Melanesian world'.[53] This has been the predominant position taken by historians of Indonesia. The opposite has been the case among activists, for whom the history of Papua has been firmly ensconced within the 'Melanesian world'. In activist histories, Papuan contact and engagement

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48 R. Chauvel, *Constructing Papuan Nationalism: history, ethnicity, and adaptation*, Policy Studies (Washington D.C., 2005). : 63-65

49 R.F. Ellen, "Conundrums about panjandrums: On the use of titles in the relations of political subordination in the Moluccas and along the Papuan coast," *Indonesia* (1986): 47-62., Chauvel, *Constructing Papuan Nationalism: history, ethnicity, and adaptation.* : 42

50 Muridan Widjojo, *The Revolt of Prince Nuku: cross-cultural alliance-making in Maluku, c.1780-1810* (Leiden:,2008), 95-110.

51 Susanna G. Rizzo, "From paradise lost to promised land: Christianity and the rise of West Papuan nationalism" Unpublished PhD., University of Wollongong, School of History and Politics (2004), 116, http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/224.

52 E. Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 7-10.

53 Rizzo, "From paradise lost to promised land" 116.

with the North and West has been confined to small notes and dismissed as marginal to identity. In this border area, many of the identities that both Papuans and foreign activists take for granted as separate have been strongly blurred.[54] However, since incorporation into Indonesia these identities have taken on new salience, and come to the forefront in an environment where loyalties to either Papua or the Indonesian state are expected to be declared.[55] In places where contact was not sustained, and enculturation and conversion was not engaged in, historic contact may have served to underscore differences. This may have had the effect of creating an identity of both belonging to a tribe, and as different to 'foreigners'.

The contrast of Papuans with others has had the effect of fixing identity. This can serve to reduce difference, creating a singular identity.[56] Such a strategy homogenises Papuans. Their presentation by activists to the world has been largely as multiple people united under one Papuan identity. Similar claims against internal difference have existed in Latin America, where a Mayan movement has asserted a shared identity and heritage, and where critics have argued the difference between communities that identify as indigenous and *mestizo* (mixed) populations are not significant.[57]

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54 "The dividing line between the two groups was ill-defined, if there was one at all" Chauvel, *Constructing Papuan nationalism*, 65

55 Ibid., 65.

56 G. White, "Natives and Nations: Identity Formation in Postcolonial Melanesia'," in *Places and Politics in an age of globalization*, eds. Roxanne Prazniak and Arif Dirlik (Oxford and New York: 2001). 142

57 K.B. Warren and J.E. Jackson, *Indigenous Movements, Self-representation, and the State in Latin America* (Austin, 2002), 9.

Papuans have frequently asserted themselves as both Melanesian, Papuan, and tribal, and these identities have been variously utilised where they are most relevant or politically useful. There has been a corresponding recognition by activists that Papua is not a place where a singular identity predominates, with the acknowledgement that "almost one thousand distinct peoples and languages" make up the inhabitants of the island of New Guinea.[58]

This recognition of tribal identity is frequent, but it is not universal. In many cases where foreign activists have utilised these terms, the differences as members of *suku* (tribal groupings) that are taken for granted among Papuans are erased when Papua is represented to the world. This happens as a result of the simplification necessary to present a case to international audiences, and as the activists themselves seek to present a much simpler picture of Papua. The removal of Papuan identity from its local contexts and its placing within international media and overseas forums can have the effect of stripping Papuan identity of its historical and local meanings,[59] and of reducing diverse Papuan groups to a fixed singular identity.[60]

Academic and public discourses

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58 'Special Correspondent', "Last stand of the Moi people," *Inside Indonesia* (June 21, 1992): 21.

59 "The more cultural identity becomes topicalized in the global media, the more locally and historically specific identities are rendered as essentialized labels for fixed, homogenous groups" White, "Natives and Nations: Identity Formation in Postcolonial Melanesia'," 142.

60 Ibid.

The concept of 'race' has persisted, despite its almost complete abandonment as an explanatory concept in most academic discourses.[61] In popular use however, it has been "hardly challenged" as a way of understanding people and their categorisation.[62]

The term 'Melanesian' as used by activists is a category borrowed from anthropologists, geographers, archaeologists and linguists,[63] and brought into popular use. As such it retains a number of these connotations, both academic and historic, despite increasing challenges to its value as an explanatory concept.[64] The idea of ordering nature within a taxonomy, and of placing humans within this classificatory framework, was an aim of the science of race,[65] and simplification of this order provided an explanatory framework for understanding Papuans. The earlier use of language designated Oceania in racial terms. However, by the 1970s this use had been deprecated in favour of a geographical designation.[66]

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61 Bronwen Douglas, "Foreign Bodies in Oceania," in *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940*, ed. Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (Canberra: 2009), 3.

62 Ibid.

63 E. Hviding, "Both sides of the beach: Knowledges of nature in Oceania," in *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures*, ed. Helaine Selin (New York:, 2003), 248.

64 Ibid.

65 Bronwen Douglas, "Seaborne Ethnography and the Natural History of Man," *The Journal of Pacific History* 38, no. 1 (2003): 3; M. Foucault, *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences* (Sussex, UK, 2002), 136-138.

66 In 1920, the Foreign Office handbook on *British Possessions in Oceania* differentiated Pacific Islanders along explicitly social evolutionist racial lines: Solomon Islanders were 'a Melanesian race, still largely in a state of barbarism' and naked savages scarcely beyond the headhunting stage of development'. Whereas Tongans were 'a branch of the Polynesian race', 'a highly advanced race who have accepted Christianity'. By the 1970s, with the public discrediting of racial language, the regional name had shed overt intimations of race in both French and English. In French *Oceanié* had contracted in conformity with the international geopolitical norm that puts the Malay Archipelago in Asia and divides Asia from Oceania along the arbitrary colonial border which divides the island of New Guinea in two. Douglas, "Foreign Bodies in Oceania," 12.

The descriptions used by activists during the last four decades match with popular understandings of the time, utilising stable claims in published academic literature in the years previous to the publication of this work.[67] It was well established that Papua had been populated for at least 30,000 years, and that the inhabitants of Papua consisted of a Melanesian grouping.[68] Although new research on Pacific pre-history has complicated the histories of Melanesia, distinctions that entrench the term Melanesian as descriptive of a defined racial grouping remain widespread, despite dispute about their validity.[69] Terrell et al. write that in 20th century academic work "many, perhaps most, agreed that there were two types of native people in the islands…"Polynesians" and "Melanesians" and nowadays more often as "Austronesians" and "Papuans"".[70]

This academic backing of the concept of Melanesia has enabled the idea of race in Papua to become entrenched. Race as a concept is something taken for granted among most members of the foreign Papua movement, if not unproblematically. While the visual distinction between a Dani from the Grand Valley and Sumatran or Javanese Indonesians is made real and apparent by the use of contrast, less bold distinctions are observable, and foreign activists with experience of Indonesia and Indonesians are not so prone to make absolute distinctions. The variation among Indonesians of Maluku and the other islands of eastern Indonesia is sufficiently observable that it is

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67 P. Bellwood et al., "The Prehistory of Oceania [and Comments and Reply]," *Current Anthropology* (1975): 9-28.

68 Ibid.

69 J.E. Terrell et al., "Foregone Conclusions? [and Comments and Reply]," *Current Anthropology* 42, no. 1 (2001): 97-124.

70 Ibid., 97.

acknowledged among many activists. Views of identity that map 'race' or 'ethnicity' onto genetic difference and physical appearance have a contested place within academia. Rather, it is generally (if not universally) accepted that culture and ethnicity are not equivalent to genetic difference, but are much more malleable. The 'primordialist approach to ethnicity' in Papua, as Upton describes it, is however common among non-academics.[71]

By separating Papuans from Asia, and by designating Papuans as a separate race, advocates for a Papuan state provide a much stronger rationale for Papuan independence. Few foreign activists claim this as a sole reason for Papuan independence. However, by circumventing the historic and political construction of national identity in Papua, these activists provide themselves with what is (in their understanding) an incontestable rhetorical strategy, or at least one much less prone to deconstruction. Neither Papuans nor foreign activists have wanted to decouple ethnicity from nationhood. Placing ethnicity at the centre of claims for independence has become an entrenched strategy.

Race and resistance

Since the claim for Papuan sovereignty is partly based on the racial difference between Melanesian Papuans and Asian Indonesians, it is natural that the

[71] S. Upton, "The Impact of Migration on the People of Papua, Indonesia" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 2009), 46.

> construction of the agents of conflict is also influenced by racial primordialism. Papuans see Indonesians as belligerent, arrogant, intolerant and fanatical. This characterisation of Indonesians has been a common theme in all of the interviews I have conducted.[72]

Both Papuans and their sympathisers engage in the use of a sharp racial dichotomy. Rather than being a distinction imposed from the outside, it is now cogenerative, and is both produced by Papuans and reinforced and affirmed by foreign West Papua activists.

Indonesia is a multi-ethnic, pluralist state, with great ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. The Indonesian state motto "Unity in Diversity" (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika) is a statement that asserts that difference exists, but is subsumed to the larger unitary state. The Indonesian national project however is a post-ethnic one which represents ethnicity as a secondary characteristic. Although the tendency for Java and Sumatra to dominate the archipelago by virtue of their large populations is present, the slogan 'Unity in Diversity' is considered to define the terms through which Indonesian collective identity is mediated. Thus, claims to independence on the basis of ethnic difference are thought to be incoherent within this framework.

The Indonesian nation state was solidified as a unitary state under Sukarno, and this conception was not publicly challenged under Suharto's New Order. This is seen most obviously in the theme park Taman Mini. This theme park was used by the New Order

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[72] T. Kivimäki, *Initiating a Peace Process in Papua: Actors, Issues, Process, and the Role of the International Community* (Washington D.C, 2006), 10.

to represent various ethnic groups in the country in simplistic ways. It reduced ethnic difference to a series of cultural and physical markers, and marginalised identity.[73] Indonesia under Sukarno's 'Guided Democracy' and the Suharto 'New Order' placed particular emphasis on a strongly unitary state. The state had limited sympathy for forms of regional self-determination, and encouraged weak sub-state level government and administration. This meant that rather than other forms of sub-state power, nationalism was pushed to the forefront, and even before the collapse of the New Order, discussion of ethnic fragmentation had emerged.[74] In the period surrounding the 1998 collapse of the New Order, the possibility of other forms of regional government emerged, and the terms of debate were re-opened.[75] However, since the democratisation of Indonesia, hope that its indigenous people would be able to express their identity in more political ways has been frustrated.

Contact with the Indonesian state has been important in the generation of the concept of Papuan identity. A coherent Papuan identity has only fully surfaced since incorporation into Indonesia, and did not exist in substantial form before this point. Even in late 1961, at the time of the formation of the New Guinea Council (*New Guinea Raad*), it would be incorrect to assert that Papuan was an established identity outside the centres of colonial contact. While the formal symbols of nationalism such as a flag and anthem had just been created, the reality is that outside of a small group

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[73] T. Murray Li, "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 01 (2000): 149.

[74] "In today's world, ideologies of large unitary states look increasingly bleak in the face of resurgent ethnic nationalisms"; Gerry van Klinken, "Irian Jaya: nationalism resurgent," *Inside Indonesia* (March 1992): 11.

[75] T. Boellstorff, "Ethnolocality," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (2002): 26.

fostered by the Dutch, little awareness existed of Papua's political status at all, let alone desires to change this designation. Otto states that teachers are one of the strongest instruments available to a state,[76] and utilises Anderson's suggestion that teachers themselves (in this case very often other Papuans) have created a sense of collective awareness.[77] The civil service has held a similar role in West Papua, creating an environment in which Papuans identify as Papuan, *contra* their Indonesian counterparts.[78] By construing Papuanness as a category that transcends *adat* (traditional) tribal boundaries, Papuans challenge the authority of the state, and assert difference as a primary motive and justification for their establishment of a separate nation-state. Ethnicity has been conflated with nationalism, and ethnic nationalism is now a primary feature of the West Papua movement.

Ethnic political posturing can involve the creation of an 'essential, pre-colonial self', generative of 'nativistic, radical or fundamentalist nationalisms',[79] in opposition to a colonial or oppressive state. Papuans frustrated by their interactions with Indonesia have come to see their identity as incompatible with being Indonesian. This is particularly the case where their primary interactions with "Indonesia" have been with the repressive functions of the state and patronising or indifferent officials.[80] Declaring

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76 Ton Otto, "Narratives of nation in the South Pacific," in *Narratives of Nation in the South Pacific* ed. T. Otto and N. Thomas (Amsterdam:, 1997). 34

77 Ibid., 34.

78 D. Rutherford, "The White Edge of the Margin: Textuality and Authority in Biak, Irian Jaya, Indonesia," *American Ethnologist* 27, no. 2 (2000): 314.

79 E.W. Said,. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: 1994. cited in Lawson, Stephanie. "The Tyranny of Tradition: Critical Reflections on Nationalist Narratives in the South Pacific. 15, in.eds. T. Otto and N. Thomas, *Narratives of Nation in the South Pacific*. (Amsterdam, 1997).

80 Tapol, "Amungme criticise Commission's findings," *Tapol Bulletin*, no. 132: 22.

a Papuan identity has been a way of saying "Indonesia go home".[81] Identification as Papuan, as against identification as Indonesian, has been a way of articulating the perception that Indonesia "does not consider Papuans human".[82] From the early 1970s the OPM located themselves within such a pan-Melanesian revolutionary framework. They adopted the ideology of Negritude, taken from anti-colonial and African American political movements. Negritude is a political strategy that involved emphasising difference, and celebrating those elements that had been rejected by the coloniser as unclean, immoral, and undeveloped.[83] In the Papuan context there has been a high degree of racism expressed towards Papuans, and very deliberate moves to 'civilise' Papuans and bring them into Indonesian lifestyles.[84]

The emphasis by Papuans of their difference from Indonesians has the effect of reducing the importance of separate tribal and subnational identities, and the narrowing of physical difference to blackness and frizzy hair, under a rubric of Papuanness or Melanesianness. The theologian Benny Giay, whose work on Papuan liberation theology has been influential, expresses these sentiments:

> Their skin is light and their hair straight. The real problem is that those in power in this republic have tried as best they could to make Papuans talk, think,

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81 Osborne, "Irian Jaya: Two ways of saying Indonesia go home," 11.

82 IRIP and Pieter Yan Magal, "Pieter Yan Magal: 'They don't consider us real humans'," *Inside Indonesia* (September 1996), 20.

83 A. Irele, "Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1965): 321-322.

84 S. Meiselas, *Encounters with the Dani: Stories from the Baliem Valley* (Göttingen and New York: 2003), 150-151.

look and behave like Javanese (or Sumatrans), and that goes against the order of God's creation. That is where the conflict comes from.[85]

Giay impresses on the reader the idea of Papuan difference as both essential and irreconcilable, and links Papuan independence to Papuan bodies. By doing so Giay makes Papuan independence an immovable object that cannot be subsumed, at least not without these ideas being abandoned. He also makes the independence of ethnically different Papuans a question of God's will. In his book *Irian Jaya Under the Gun* Jim Elmslie taps this sentiment "it is... a question of identity. They are black with frizzy hair; the Malays are brown skinned straight haired foreigners", and expresses how the idea is expressed frequently in Papua.[86]

The idea of a pan-Melanesian identity has also been used by Papuans and activists as a strategic move to promote solidarity abroad. The idea of a pan-Melanesian identity envisaged an ethnic group encompassing all Melanesians, with a common interest that would be supported by a political alliance across borders. It implied a strong concept of Melanesia as not only a racial identification handed down from the outside, but also of political self-identification. During the 1970s and 1980s a number of states identifying as primarily or largely Melanesian gained independence from their colonial powers. These included: Fiji (1970), Papua New Guinea (1975), and the Solomon Islands (1978) and Vanuatu (1980); and the period also saw a strong indigenous

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85 Abdul Gafur, cited in Giay, B. "Towards a New Papua." *Inside Indonesia*, no. 67 (September 2001): 29. I thank Stuart Upton for alerting me to this article, see; Upton, "The Impact of Migration on the People of Papua, Indonesia.", 49

86 Elmslie, *Irian Jaya Under the Gun.* : 23

political movement in New Caledonia/Kanaky. This common experience created a shared anti-colonial identification. This was particularly evident in the intervention of Papua New Guinea in the conflict over Vanuatu's independence.[87] The concept of pan-Melanesian identity was useful in these nations in unifying separate identities, and was particularly so for Papua New Guinea as a nation that comprised of hundreds of groups with few common histories that were unified largely through colonial boundaries. The idea of pan-Melanesian solidarity was later institutionalised within Papua New Guinea by Bernard Narokobi under the formal banner of Melanesian Solidarity.[88]

However, since the mid-1970s solidarity from Papua New Guinea's political elites has been limited, due in large part to a desire to maintain positive relations with Indonesia,[89] and having little to gain from an independent West Papua. Although calling for Pacific solidarity has been a matter of practical concern for activists, it has not been a particularly productive one in terms of outcomes. This idea of pan-Melanesian identity (and indeed that 'Melanesian' exists as a category of people with shared characteristics) has been appealed to since the 1980s by both Papuans and foreign activists, with West Papuan delegates approaching the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). At various times they have had support at the PIF from Vanuatu, which has included West Papua as an observer on a number of occasions. There were a number of reasons why Vanuatu gave support to West Papuan independence, and promoted their aspirations, with the idea of being a

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87 N. MacQueen, "Beyond Tok Win: The Papua New Guinea Intervention in Vanuatu, 1980," *Pacific Affairs* 61, no. 2 (1988): 235-252.

88 B. Narokobi, *The Melanesian way: total cosmic vision of life* (Port Moresby:, 1980), 247-277.

89 Chauvel, *Constructing Papuan nationalism: history, ethnicity, and adaptation*, 62.

'Melanesian' nation being one of them.[90] The maintenance of this Melanesian solidarity, and the promotion internationally of the idea of Papuans as Melanesians has been the work of a number of individuals, but crucial work has come from Rex Rumakiek, John Ondawame and Andy Ayamiseba, based at Port Vila in Vanuatu. Their work with the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC), and support from members of the post-independence Vanuatu Government, gave their movement some degree of international legitimation. Rumakiek emphasised these shared connections in a 1985 interview,[91] and the work they did has served to maintain this identity, with this still recognised around the Pacific in the mid 2000s.[92] However as the both symbolic and political support for Melanesian solidarity has waned, the idea has lost power among Papuan activists in exile. This has particularly been the case as these 'Melanesian' countries have aligned strategically with Indonesia.

This pan-Melanesian concept is a form of expression of identity, and is the result of processes of identity generation.[93] Such pan-ethnic identity formation can be seen in a similar process in Central America, where Mayan peoples have coalesced under various pan-Mayan umbrellas as a way of asserting their rights against an often

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90 The Vanuatu national flag contains black, which 'symbolizes Melanesia and the Melanesian race', Douglas, "Foreign Bodies in Oceania," 30, n37.

91 Rex Rumakiek and Inside Indonesia, "West Papua: Asia or Melanesia," *Inside Indonesia* (July 1985): 24.

92 Hone Harawira, Māori Party Member of Parliament in New Zealand and former activist with the PCRC underlined his belief in this Pacific solidarity and Melanesian identity. Pers comm., 17 August 2006, Wellington.

93 Stephanie Lawson, "The Tyranny of Tradition: Critical Reflections on Nationalist Narratives in the South Pacific," in *Narratives of Nation in the South Pacific* eds. T. Otto and N. Thomas (Amsterdam:, 1997), 15.

indifferent or actively hostile state.[94] However, the Mayan movements have differed in their assertion of an indigenous linguistic revival against the state, whereas Papuan nationalism has tended to accommodate *Bahasa Indonesia* as a pan-Papuan lingua franca.

[94] On accounts of indigeneity in the face of '*la violencia*'; see: K.B. Warren, *Indigenous Movements and their Critics: Pan-Maya activism in Guatemala* (New Jersey:, 1998), 91-101.

Conclusion

Papuans have been portrayed by activists as different on the basis of their separation from the rest of Indonesia and on the basis of their inclusion within the category of Melanesian. While pre-incorporation contact with other Indonesians is acknowledged, it is regarded as minor. This separation from the ethnic groups 'Indonesian' and 'Malay' forms the basis for a number of claims about Papuanness.

In most activist characterisations, it is assumed that Papuan identity is static, and it is assumed that it cannot be incorporated within the Indonesian state. This is to understate the robustness of Papuan identity. Expectations of how Papuans will fare under Indonesian rule are usually characterised in highly negative ways, and stress the damage that such contact will cause. I do not wish to replicate the disparagement of indigenous nationalism as 'inauthentic'.[95] This nationalism, formed under the umbrella of 'Papua' is both real and entrenched in Papua. But this is not to say the result of 'natural' categories. It is a political statement, one that has emerged since the 1960s, and that has been endorsed and used straightforwardly since then by the international activist movement.

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95 "It is an irony and increasingly a tragedy of decolonisation that indigenous nationalisms have been, successively, repressed by colonialism, and then disparaged as shallow, inauthentic or merely ethnic by the universalising ethnocentrism of globalism." Douglas, "Weak states and other nationalisms: emerging Melanesian paradigms?," 3.

– Chapter 2 –

Contested histories

This chapter examines the history of violence in Papua, and how past and present interpretations of violence share many characteristics in their representation by foreign activists. Importantly for this chapter, understandings of essentialized difference become the basis for narratives of violence, which stress Papuan victimhood and Indonesian agency. Papuan society is seen as vulnerable to being overrun by intruders, and thus the possibility of genocide is easily invoked.

The existence of a particular Papuan history among activists is a key tenet of their activism, driving their positions on Indonesia, and their understanding of human rights and violence within Papua. A lack of firm information on the actions of the Indonesian state for much of the period since the 1960s leaves the field open to unchallenged speculation.

In this chapter, as in the rest of the thesis, I discuss how the essentialisation of Papuans as victims, *vis-a-vis* their Indonesian counterparts results in an incomplete picture of Papua. These simplifications of Papuan history fit with preconceived notions of the

relationship between Papuans and other Indonesians, which serve among activists to underline notions of difference and the need for Papuan independence.

Iconicity

Below is a photo that was taken by Robert Mitton, a mining logistics officer, author, and amateur anthropologist whose edited journals and photographs of Irian Jaya were published posthumously in 1984. It was published with the following caption:

One is constantly aware of the oppressive presence of the army and police, all laden with guns and ammunition... The army act like bandit dictators. They have instructions from Jakarta to civilise the people.[96]

The image was published on the last page of *The Lost World of Irian Jaya*, as the bookend to a section entitled *Change*, which described in negative terms: interactions between Papuans and Indonesians, the process of Indonesianisation and integration into the nation, and the stultifying presence of both the civilian administration and the military.[97]

Although this image was not published initially in an activist publication, it has subsequently been reproduced in a number of locations, and represents an iconic portrayal of Indonesia's presence in the province during the late 1970s. It was subsequently reproduced in an ACFOA report[98] and a number of other documents as a representation of the invasion by Indonesia.[99] This image and the quotation were also specifically reproduced in Robin Osborne's review of the book.[100] . It is an image with authority which is achieved by way of its source and reproduction by other trusted sources.

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96 R.D. Mitton, *The Lost World of Irian Jaya* (Sydney: 1983), 234.

97 Ibid., 214-235.

98 Australian Council for Overseas Aid, *Irian Jaya : Indonesia's 'Internal Affair' Goes International (Again) : ACFOA briefing* (Canberra:, 1984).

99 Meiselas, *Encounters with the Dani: Stories from the Baliem Valley*, 141.

100 Robin Osborne, "The obliteration of a people (review)," *Inside Indonesia*, April 1989.

Photographic images serve to crystalise moments in time, and do so in ways that are seen as authoritative in their recordings of events.[101] The photographic image is privileged due to its perceived accuracy as a form of representation. This photograph has had the effect among activists of freezing this moment in Papua's history.

This particular image is useful in illustrating a number of concepts which this chapter deals with. The photograph with its caption frames several messages. This image, of Indonesian soldiers posed on a helicopter, is representative of a terror that is easily interpreted, but lacks references to specific acts. Foreign activists have utilised general terms when talking about violence in Papua, and have frequently made use of large numbers, in the absence of an ability to do the kind of investigation that would empower them to talk about specific acts. The photograph also evokes a colonial frontier where 'civilisation' is imposed with violence on indigenous natives. When it is presented in Mitton's book, together with a great number of pictures of Papuans in traditional dress and engaged in traditional agriculture, it also presents Indonesian technologies and modernity as instruments of death. Indonesians are portrayed as invading a primitive land.

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101 "...we should reject the view, famously espoused by Susan Sontag, that the photographic sign is governed by conventions and presents a coded version of reality to the same degree as drawing or painting. It would rather appear the photographic sign is iconic, or even indexical, bearing a straight simulacrum or a trace of reality, presenting it rather than representing it." G. Tiso, "Impossible Recollections" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2006), 63, http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/gtiso/impossible_recollections.html.

Natural histories: Papuans as ancient, primitive, and of the land

Papuan history has been understood by outsiders in ways that draw from the physical environment itself, and Papuans themselves are presented as close to nature (as discussed in Chapter Two). The jungles of Papua and high mountains are presented in ways that underline the mysterious and unknown nature of much of the province.[102] These not only serve to underline the primitivity and unknowability of Papuan people, but describe a place in which anything could be happening, outside the view of foreigners.[103] Jungles and tropical lands are often associated with acts of violence and irrationality; as primeval spaces inhabited by "people without history"[104]. The island of New Guinea has played host to projections about darkness and cannibalism, sustaining these well into the present. Papuans have been represented by anthropologists as "stone-age" (both with and without quotation marks).[105] The emphasis placed on Papuan primitivity in popular and anthropological representations of Papua such as in the film *Dead Birds*,[106] has served to reinforce this image. While these representations are often neutral or sympathetic in their portrayal of Papuans, they have the effect of de-historicising Papuans. Papua has been frequently referred to by activists as an "El

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102 Bohane, Thompson, and Elmslie, *West Papua: Follow the Morning Star*, 100.

103 Ibid.

104 Michael Taussig, "Culture of Terror--Space of Death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, no. 3 (1984): 482-483.

105 See, for example; A.F.R. Wollaston et al., *Pygmies & Papuans: The Stone Age To-day in Dutch New Guinea* (London:, 1912); Matthiessen, *Under the Mountain Wall: A Chronicle of Two Seasons in the Stone Age*; OW Hampton, *Culture of Stone: Sacred and Profane Uses of Stone among the Dani* (College Station, Texas: 1999).

106 R Gardner, *Dead Birds*, 1962.

Dorado".[107] This word was originally used by Spaniards and Sir Walter Raleigh to refer to a mythical kingdom that was supposedly located in what is now Guyana, and loaded with riches.[108] Although this usage in a Papuan context appears incidental, it reflects the commonly held idea among activists that that Papua is an unexplored place of riches, and the target of jealous invaders who seek to exploit it.

It is not only among westerners that the island has been seen as a place of primitivity, and an unknown space. There has been a widespread understanding in Indonesia of Papuans as primitive and backward people; an understanding which continues into the present.[109] Representations of Papuans as wild and violent, and the jungles as spaces where this primitivity has prevailed were adopted by the Indonesian military and used to buttress their stance against the OPM during the 1970s and 1980s.[110] This understanding has continued, as seen in crude representations of Papuan men by soldiers.[111] This dehumanisation, or perhaps a partial dehumanisation that means Papuans are seen as lower level primitive humans, may have been part of creating an environment in which severe human rights abuses including killing and torture could be sustained.

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107 Interviewee 3.; Greg Poulgrain, *From West New Guinea to Irian Jaya: The Politics of Eldorado* ([unpublished], 2001).

108 "El Dorado," in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: 1989).

109 The level of dehumanisation during this period has been related to me by a human rights worker (Anon. pers comm.). For recent manifestations are described in L Butt and J Munro, "Rebel girls? Unplanned pregnancy and colonialism in highlands Papua, Indonesia," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 9, no. 6 (2007): 585-598.

110 See;S.E. Kirksey,and J. A. D. Roemajauw. "The Wild Terrorist Gang: The Semantics of Violence and Self-determination in West Papua." *Oxford Development Studies* 30, no. 2 (2002): 189-203.

111 A prominent such example has been in the practice of dressing as "Papuan" warriors, adopting crude face and body paint and grass skirts. See ibid..

The activist literature on Papua (as described in the introduction) is now substantial, but reflects a considerable homogeneity in terms of its representations of Papuan history. In most of these documents, a history of several pages is laid out, spanning a coherent narrative which covers: discovery, limited colonisation, betrayed independence, and occupation.[112] The period 1962-1969, in which the territory was administered by Indonesia under the mandate of the United Nations, forms the pivotal point in all of these histories.

A number of documents and books describe in a single line a pre-history of 40,000 years, or omit it entirely.[113] These histories then continue briefly through the moments of documented contact with westerners. These contacts are often minimised to present a Papua that is isolated from the outside world. Activists also emphasis the *laissez faire* nature of the ownership claimed in the 19th century by the Sultanate of Tidore, preceding Dutch colonial possession. In these portrayals Papuans, particularly highlanders, remain immersed in a pre-history. These histories describe the expeditions to the interior in the 1930s and flights over the Baliem Valley, including the popularised account of an accidental stranding of survivors from a plane crash in this "Shangri-La".[114] This form of historical description has the effect of keeping Papua separated from the rest of the archipelago. Not only have Papuan physiognomy and ecology have been kept separate, but history has also been self-contained.

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112 This is the case in most of these works. For a representative example, see Budiardjo and Liong, *West Papua: The Obliteration of a People* : 2-10

113 As above, this approach is fairly uniform. One of the few books written in English solely dedicated to Papuan history takes this approach as a matter of simplicity. See: J. Saltford, *The United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of West Papua, 1962-1969: The Anatomy of Betrayal* (London and New York: 2003).

114 Meiselas, *Encounters with the Dani: Stories from the Baliem Valley*, 16-31.

The claim of a Papua unchanged for thousands of years is also a statement with powerful implications which may not be fully appreciated by their advocates. The removal of Papuans from history creates an impression that their participation in modern history is an aberration, and that Papuans should be left alone. That Papuans are unmolested by the outside world may be the intent of some foreign Papua activists, while others may be more interested to stress only the harm caused by negative intrusions. Papuans are of course not without a pre-Dutch history, and are not without a history of contact and movement, as various writings from the 1960s through to the present (reviewed below) would imply. The trope of timelessness is however firmly entrenched in a number of activist portrayals. These interpretations of history also label Papuans as peaceful, and living in conditions that were generally static. This discounts the fact that "the tribal zone can be a very violent place",[115] and that warfare was a significant feature of life for many Papuans.[116]

Writing about indigenous peoples often resembles "an elegy to a dying way of life".[117] The idea of outside contact causing devastation has quite frequently been used to

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115 R.B. Ferguson and N.L. Whitehead, *War in the tribal zone: Expanding states and indigenous warfare* (Santa Fe: 1992), 27.

116 On this subject as it applies to Papua, with a focus on Dani, see the series of articles; B.M. Knauft, "Melanesian Warfare: a Theoretical History," *Oceania* 60, no. 4 (June 1990): 250-312; Bruce M. Knauft and Paul Shankman, "Warfare, Western Intrusion and Ecology in Melanesia [and comment and reply]," *Man* 27, no. 2, New Series (June 1992): 399-403.; B.M. Knauft and P. Shankman, "Warfare, Western Intrusion and Ecology in Melanesia" (London, 1992).

117 P. Hulme and N.L. Whitehead, *Wild majesty: encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the present day: an anthology* (New York, USA, 1992), 345.

describe the impact of outsiders on small Pacific nations.[118] This notion was reinforced again in the 1960s with the formalisation by Moorehead of the concept of a "fatal impact" on peaceful less developed people by virulent outsiders. [119] These characterisations are no longer as dominant, having been largely rejected by academia, but their power persists in many popular understandings of Western contact with indigenous peoples. A number of representations of Papua by activists fit within this pattern. The 2003 film *Raising West Papua*, produced in conjunction with the Melbourne branch of the Australian West Papua Association, presents this perspective clearly. In this film, footage of soldiers parading with weapons in 2001 is immediately juxtaposed with scenes taken in the 1960s by Gardner and Heider of Dani living traditionally. The situation in Papua was described as a "matter of survival" by one of my interviewees,[120] and as showing signs of genocide by a number of others.[121] In the following sections, I show how these claims of genocide have come about and been perpetuated.

The absence of direct accounts by outsiders

As Varshney et. al. attest, creating baseline studies of violence is a difficult task in Indonesia, and information of any reliability is often lacking, especially in the absence

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118 One such 19th century example is found on the monument that tops Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill) in Auckland, where the "father of Auckland" John Logan Campbell dedicates his monument "to a proud race", with the implication that Auckland's Māori have been displaced by a stronger people.

119 A. Moorehead, *The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific, 1767-1840* (London: 1966., 1966).

120 Interviewee 3,

121 Interviewees; 1,3,6,7.,

of access by researchers. [122] These difficulties have arisen as a result of the hostility of the New Order regime to examination of its performance of violence. There was also antagonism to the imposition of 'foreign' human rights standards on Indonesia. Difficulties in investigation have also continued in the successor democratic state. This has been due to discomfort relating to investigations that might weaken the legitimacy of key institutions, work that would challenge the still powerful remnants of the New Order who have continued to exert influence, and a distrust of outsiders who are seen to be challenging the legitimacy of Indonesia's control of Papua within the unitary state.[123]

Characterisations of Papua that stress the unknown are not unreasonable, given the limited nature of Papua's recorded history. Until the 1950s much of the island had remained out of the view of outsiders; expeditions to the interior of Papua were largely for the purposes of harvesting anthropological information and souls until the 1970s.

The dearth of eyewitness accounts from the province meant that a small number of accounts took on great significance as 'genuine glimpses' of an otherwise closed region. One of these books, Robert Mitton's *The Lost World of Irian Jaya*, fulfilled this role. The closure of the province to outsiders, and the implications of this were explicitly noted by Mitton:

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122 Varshney, A., M. Z. Tadjoeddin, and R. Panggabean. 2008. Creating Datasets in Information-Poor Environments: Patterns of Collective Violence in Indonesia, 1990-2003. *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8, no. 3: 361-394.

123 *International Crisis Group - Papua: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions* (Jakarta and Brussels:, September 5, 2006), 1, http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4364.

23 June 1976

I eventually became convinced that within a couple of months there was not going to be a single European left in Irian Jaya... many missionaries were leaving... the German research expedition and most of the United Nations too... everyone was beginning to think that visas were off until the elections which, although a year away, are currently dominating everything.[124]

This emptying of the province of foreigners has been seen as a move designed to facilitate military action without attention or interference, and it was a relatively successful one, insofar as most of the remaining westerners were missionaries who had attained Indonesian citizenship, and were constrained in their ability to speak. Since then, restrictions on entry and travel by foreigners have precluded thorough investigations of conditions. The province was strictly controlled as a military operations zone (DOM, *Daerah Operasi Militer*). Despite this closure by the military, reports of violence have persisted causing the province to be perceived as a zone of violence. However, this has not prevented Papuans themselves from conducting investigations and recording histories, as will be seen below. The results of these investigations have then been distributed internationally, and become part of the activist toolkit that constitutes Papua as a sphere of violence.

Genocide and *memoria passionis*

[124] Mitton, *The Lost World of Irian Jaya*, 234.

> Sometimes the earth dances but it is often dark there now. It is a land stolen, defaced, mutilated.
>
> He ventured into a dangerous and often dark abyss to get his story. Everyone should read and reflect upon it. [125]

There have been a number of nostalgic portrayals of the Papuan situation as the death of the land itself, and of a decline from a bright and glorious land to a darkened one as the result of mass violence at the hands of the Indonesian military. Activists express a form of affect and genuine sadness at the loss of paradise (something also common to environmental activism, [126] including environmental activism on Papua). Reviewing the third edition of *Obliteration of a People* and with reference to the *Lost World of Irian Jaya*, Robin Osborne made a note of this portrayal of Papua. [127] Indonesia has been seen by activists as the source of this destruction, through a process of genocide or near-genocidal violence. The question of genocide hangs large over the field of Papuan studies and advocacy.

Genocide has been primarily understood as the mass killing of Papuans, but also as attempts at removing or extinguishing Papuanness.

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125 N. Sharp, "Paradise Betrayed: Correspondence," *Quarterly Essay* no. 8 (2002): 122.

126 This is an emotion that is not confined to Papua activists, and being seen among environmentalists and others who chronicle change; see Foale, S., and M. Macintyre. on the coverage of 'unspoiled paradise'; S. Foale and M. Macintyre, "Green Fantasies: Photographic representations of biodiversity and ecotourism in the Western Pacific," *Journal of Political Ecology* 12 (2005): 1-22.

127 Osborne, "The obliteration of a people (review)," 25.

One of my interviewees relayed to me that an Australian missionary they knew well had spoken of seeing the "rivers ran red with blood" in highlands Papua during the 1970s, and of hospital records showing a wave of injured and dead.[128] This unpublished account represents one of the few eyewitness accounts by outsiders of the violence in Papua during this time. In the absence of media coverage and contemporaneous attempts to quantify violence, measuring the scale of violence has been largely a matter of speculation by activists. Foreign activists have been excluded from Papua, and have been unable to contextualise or research directly claims of mass violence and genocide. As a result, activist claims are separated from the contexts in which they have been made by Papuans. When Papuan suffering is put into an international arena and generalised, it becomes what Feldman has called: "Generalities of bodies; dead, wounded, starving, diseased, and homeless".[129] Such generalities are seen in the large non-specific numbers that are presented as death tolls for Papua.

Activists have frequently made the claim that at least 100,000 Papuans have been killed in the period since Indonesia assumed effective control over the territory in 1962.[130] This figure is commonly recognised among members of the foreign pro-Papua

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[128] Interviewee 3. This person has unpublished accounts from missionaries present during this violence.

[129] A. Feldman, "On cultural anesthesia: from Desert Storm to Rodney King," *American Ethnologist* 21, no. 2 (1994): 404-418, cited in Didier Fassin, *When Bodies Remember: Experiences and Politics of AIDS in South Africa*, California Series in Public Anthropology (Berkeley, 2007), XII.

[130] This figure is repeated by a large number of sources, often in conjunction with claims of genocide and other atrocities. Perhaps the most prominent use to date was in the advertisements of Ian Melrose, where the figure was used alongside comparisons to death numbers in East Timor.

Two representative samples follow; "For the past forty five years the people of West Papua have been subjected to cultural genocide and gross human rights violations including rape, torture, murder, and massacre, inflicted by the Indonesian armed forces. Since 1963 more than 100,000 West Papuans have been killed." Peace Movement Aotearoa, "West Papua: the forgotten Pacific country," *Peace Movement Aotearoa*, 2006, http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/wpapua.htm. ; "the Indonesian

movement as a matter of speculation in the absence of reliable figures, but is it seen as a realistic one, with the proviso often added that the 'true figure is likely to be much higher'. This death toll has been the driver of much activism, and used to de-legitimise Indonesia's presence in Papua. As the result of its effectiveness it has been widely reproduced. These figures are not accompanied by any strong substantiation, and although such documentary evidence is considered desirable, it is not considered necessary – the dark gap in Papua's history is where this genocide is claimed to have taken place.

During the 1990s, Papua was seen within a context in which Indonesia was ruled by "one of the world's most brutal and repressive regimes", in which "almost one third of the East Timorese population (about 200,000) have died".[131] Such accounts of mass violence elsewhere in Indonesia made credible large numbers of dead.

The numbers used by activists varied, but were high by the early 1990s. In the book *Let Them Be,* the total is estimated as follows:

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military (TNI) has murdered over 100,000 Papuan men, women and children and tortured and raped countless others" - Benny Wenda (attributed as Benny Wemba) cited in Sam Urquhart, "A Victory in West Papua," *Mining Advocacy Network,* April 26, 2007, http://www.jatam.org/english/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=318&Itemid=1.

[131] Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), *West Papua Information Kit 1998* : 31.

> The number of Papuans killed by the Indonesians in the course of the years was estimated at some 70,000 (about 10% of the total population) by the majority of observers. Other estimates were almost twice this.[132]

However, the book does not refer to any sources for this claim, and as a result its provenance is unknown. Similarly, the 1993 booklet: *West Papua, Plunder in Paradise* stated unsourced estimates that:

> Between May 1963 and May 1977, more than 155,000 Melanesians were killed by the Indonesians. Now, 12 years later, a figure of 300,000 would not be an exaggeration.

The 2003 West Papua Info and Action Kit, distributed as a series of articles on DVD, restates a figure of 100,000 in the context of a call for an international review of the Act of Free Choice.

> Thirty-two years on, despite the best efforts of the international community, the issue has not gone away. At the same time, an estimated 100,000 West Papuans have died while their land and natural resources have been seized for the benefit of Indonesia and its multi-national partners.[133]

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132 Gavin Breen, *Let Them Be: West Papua Revisited* (Alice Springs: 1993), 18.

133 "West Papua Action - UN Review," *West Papua Action*, 2002, file:///D:/historical%20documents/West%20Papua%20Action%20-%20UN%20Review.htm.

What all of these activist accounts share, despite their differing numbers and methodology, is an inability to engage directly with Papua in ways that would make reliable estimation of death-tolls and figures possible. Because Papua has remained a closed space to outsiders, and also to most Indonesian researchers (see Varshney, above), estimates are made on the basis of extrapolation from known acts of extreme violence in Papua, from demographics, and from the numbers killed in East Timor. Reliable or not, they represent the attempts of foreigners to grapple with a thorny part of Papuan history.

***Memoria Passionis* and trauma**

Recently, a friend decried that I was representing genocide as a question of numbers and legal intent, framing things in western terms rather than as a matter of individual and communal suffering. Papuan history, he said, should be understood in terms of *memoria passionis*.[134] The concept of *memoria passionis* is a theological idea that has been developed by Papuan theologians, particularly Theo van den Broek and Benny Giay.[135] The concept signifies a way of understanding traumatic events, and that these

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134 Pers comm., anon., October 8, 2009.

135 A number of titles have been produced utilising this concept, with a number published by the Office of Peace and Justice (SKP) of the Catholic Church, Jayapura:

Memoria passionis di Papua, "kondisi sosial-politik dan hak asasi manusia 2001/Theo van den Broek," *Jakarta: Sekretariat Keadilan dan Perdamaian Keuskupan Jayapura* (2003);

Memoria passionis di Papua, "kondisi hak asasi manusia dan Gerakan Aspirasi Merdeka: gambaran 1999/Theo PA van den Broek," *Jakarta: Keuskupan Jayapura/Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan* (2001);

"Memoria Passionis Di Papua: Kondisi Hak Asasi Manusia dan Gerakan Aspirasi Merdeka [Memory of suffering in Papua, human rights conditions and independence movement aspirations]" (Jayapura: Sekretariat Keamanan dan Perdamaian, Keuskupan Jayapura, 1999);

memories can be addressed and resolved. The relatively small population of Papua has meant that although the number of people directly affected by these events may not be on the scale reported by activist groups, the presence of this violence can be felt widely. The trauma associated with the victims is remembered and transmitted among a much larger population. Farhadian describes Papua as being more 'sociocentric', than post-enlightenment western societies, and that collectively felt pain is thus transmitted more readily.[136]

Memories of past acts are felt in present day Papua, as there has not been a clean break that would allow Papuans to historicise them, and provide a clear separation between the past and the present.[137] This can be seen in the Catholic Church of Papua's *Memoria Passionis* series, which seeks to sketch out this idea, and contextualise it with examples:

> The collective memory of the people in and around Danau Besar: Paniai, Tage, Tigi in Paniai residence keeps [alive] the suffering (anguish): Obano war in 1956, the Paniai resistance in 1969, and Madi war in 1981. These three bloody incidents have claimed casualties and are traumatically etched in people's memory.[138]

T. van den Broek et al., "Memoria Passionis di Papua, Kondisi Sosial Politik dan Hak Asasi Manusia, Gambaran 2000," *Jakarta: SKP Keuskupan Jayapura dan LSPP Jakarta* (2001).

[136] C.E. Farhadian, "Reflexive Communities: The Non-Western Church as Healing Community," *Pastoral Psychology* 49, no. 3 (2001): 241-250.

[137] P. Ricoeur, *Memory, history, forgetting*, 101.

[138] Office for Justice and Peace, Catholic Church, Jayapura (SKP Jayapura), *Historical Sketch of the Paniai's Resistance and Suffering at Tiga Danau Besar in Paniai Regency, Papua* (Jayapura:, 2000), 4, http://www.hampapua.org/skp/skp01/smp-08e.pdf.

It is significant that these events are described in this way. It denotes that they are not separated from the present, and that historical consciousness colours the present.

This historical consciousness was particularly evident in 2000 when this report was published. However, discussions with Papuans, including with the former director of the Catholic Church's Office for Justice and Peace Jayapura, Budi Hernawan, has led me to believe that these interpretations of the past, as fundamentally existing within the present, are still sustained. Writing about embodied suffering in post-apartheid South Africa, Didier Fassin suggests that genocide is perhaps the only "universal intolerable",[139] and its use in discourse in post-apartheid South Africa signals a rejection of unbearable acts perpetrated systematically against Blacks. Similarly, in Papua acts of extreme violence including mass murder and torture were unbearable for the Papuans who suffered under them. These acts may not have had the scope or number that the term genocide usually implies, but they can be reasonably understood as an attempt to extinguish Papuans of their independent 'spirit'. Genocide is an event that tests the limits of representation,[140] and has been said to lie outside discourse "just as it lies outside reason".[141] There continues to be difficulty in representing the violence experienced in Papua's past.

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139 Didier Fassin, *When Bodies Remember* 235.

140 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History,Fforgetting* , 254-261.

141 George Steiner, cited in Ibid., 257.

Taussig states that "narratives are in themselves evidence of the process whereby culture of terror was created and sustained".[142] Narratives of violence are

ways in which force against Papuans, and a military presence that is frequently overwhelming have been conceptualised, both by Papuans and by foreign activists.[143] Traumatic interpretations of the past are sustained because they resonate with the experiences of Papuans, a great number of whom have sufficient knowledge of extreme acts of violence for claims of genocide to be credible.[144] There is little question of there being a large number of incidents in which Papuans have been killed, tortured, raped, or otherwise abused, particularly during the New Order period, but with reasonable frequency both before and afterwards.

Such acts have provided continuous motivation for West Papuan activists, both Papuans and foreigners living abroad. Such an expression can be seen in an interview with Rex Rumakiek in *Inside Indonesia*:

> When we go hunting we sometimes find our own people half decomposed with bullet wounds in them...

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142 Taussig, "Culture of Terror--Space of Death.," 482.

143 See, for example, on the military and the Amungme; C. Ballard, "The Signature of Terror," in *Inscribed landscapes: marking and making Place*, ed. Bruno David and Meredith Wilson (Honolulu: 2002).

144 "Trauma is less about structuring the past through memory than about being structured by it through pathological forms of repression"; Gary Wilder, "Race, reason, impasse: Césaire, Fanon, and the legacy of emancipation," *Radical History Review*, no. 90 (2004): 44.

Rumakiek then went on to describe similar acts of violence against his family and community. Such experiences of violence are commonplace. Papuans in exile have described in detail to me their own experience of torture and beatings at the hands of security forces. They have also described often lethal violence against those they are close to. Such specific claims made in the first person on behalf of themselves or named individuals are both compelling and credible. Survivor testimony using detailed claims adds 'truth value' to more generalised accounts of suffering in Papua.

Violence has been used in exemplary ways against prominent local Papuans expressing resistance to political and cultural incorporation to Indonesia, with well known examples in the killing of Theys Eluay and Willem Onde in 2001 and Arnold Ap in 1984,[145] and the death of Thomas Wanggai under uncertain circumstances in a Jakarta jail during 1996. Although the frequency and scale of such violence has decreased since the fall of the New Order it remains inscribed in the minds of Papuans, where it plays a crucial role in managing Papuan dissent. This continued violence has meant that Papuans have been unable to escape their traumatic pasts, and that feelings of persecution continue in the present.

The use of history in the service of nationalism

145 R. Chauvel and I.N. Bhakti, *The Papua conflict: Jakarta's perceptions and policies* (Washington D.C.: 2004), 34-35.

The writing of history has been constrained in Papua. A lack of outside accounts has meant that many important events have so far been without a written record. Restriction of research into Papua's history by both Papuans and outsiders, and suppression of recording of history by Papuans has meant that much of Papua's history is unwritten. This lack of history has meant Papua is able to sustain a range of interpretations, though thus far only a relatively limited number have been produced. Most fall easily into coherent Papuan and Indonesian nationalist narratives. These narratives have developed since the 1960s, and now form the basis for the interpretation of history. Activists have relayed these histories in straightforward terms.

Papua's history of being understood as a national entity is recent, and has developed only since the 1960s. Before Indonesia's independence in 1949, Papua had been a territory incorporated into the Netherlands East Indies. After Indonesia's war of independence, Papua remained a colony of the Netherlands as Netherlands New Guinea, and was developed as such, with a separate identity as a Dutch possession and the development of this identity among a small group of Dutch-educated Papuans.[146] During the late 1950s and early 1960s Indonesian efforts to regain the territory intensified, on the basis that the contiguous borders of colonial territories formed the boundaries of newly decolonised independent states. In the face of this, "the West

146 Chauvel, *Constructing Papuan Nationalism*, 37-51.

Papuans were encouraged by Holland to work towards their day of freedom",[147] and develop symbols of nationhood including a flag and anthem. During the last months of 1961, as conflict escalated, the Dutch convened an council of prominent Papuans the *New Guinea Raad.*[148] The council was filled by direct election in Manokwari and Hollandia, and by electors or chosen representatives from elsewhere. The *Raad* was rendered inconsequential by subsequent events including; the New York Agreement between the United States, Indonesia, and the Netherlands, and the process towards incorporation into Indonesia this set in train. The council has been used by Papuans to claim that they were indeed an independent nation, and the date of the convening of the *Raad* has been appropriated as a Papuan independence day. Colonialism mapped onto Papua a set of borders that were previously incomprehensible, and declared that those who lived within them were 'Papuan', by virtue of their geographic location, rather than any pre-configured identity.[149] However, since the creation of the idea of Papua, and the widespread acceptance of Papuans as objectively 'different' (as discussed in chapter one), this idea has come to be a dominant one.

The history of the transfer from Dutch to Indonesian control through the Act of Free Choice (*Pepera)* has been the subject of prolonged and intense discussion among Papuans, particularly since the early 2000s.[150] A number of academic works have

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147 Osborne, "The flag that won't go away," 29.

148 J. Pouwer, "The colonisation, decolonisation and recolonisation of West New Guinea," *The Journal of Pacific History* 34, no. 2 (1999): 165

149 This notion of colonial territoriality mapped onto unwitting or unwilling subjects is expressed clearly in; A. Gupta and J. Ferguson, "Beyond" culture": Space, identity, and the politics of difference," *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1992): 6-23.

150 Discussion on Indonesian language Papuan email lists of *Pepera* is frequent and sustained. A common particular focus is on how the re-evaluation of this event might cause the United Nations

looked in depth at the subject, particularly the United Nations process, and the diplomatic wrangling involved in this transfer of sovereignty.[151] The Netherlands had sought to retain Netherlands New Guinea as a dependent territory during the late 1940s and through the 1950s, against frequent Indonesian claims to the territory, and from the late 1950s, sustained low-level military activity. By the early 1960s however, international geopolitics made it increasingly difficult for the Dutch to maintain this position. The United States was willing to trade on the issue in order to reduce Soviet influence over Indonesia, and the growing membership of the Non-Aligned Movement exerted pressure on the United Nations to find a solution that allowed decolonisation from the Dutch. In this context, a 1962 transfer of power to Indonesia was arranged, and a nominal referendum organised for 1969. On the basis of what was a clearly coerced pro-Indonesian vote (the Act of Free Choice), both Papuan and foreign activists have sought to revisit the period, and used it to challenge the authority of Indonesia. John Saltford's *The United Nations and the Indonesian takeover of West Papua* is typical of such works, in that it has a limited focus on events outside of the 1962-1969 time-period, and does not consider Indonesian perspectives on Papua at length.

Against these versions of history, the incorporation of Papua was central to a number of Indonesian nationalist narratives in the 1950s and 1960s. Indonesia sought to make

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(and thus the international community) to change its stance on the legitimacy of Indonesia's continued incorporation of Papua.

[151] Pieter Drooglever, *An Act of Free Choice: Decolonisation and the Right to Self-Determination in West Papua* (London: 2010); J. Saltford, The United Nations and the Indonesian takeover of West Papua, 1962-1969: The Anatomy of Betrayal (London and New York, 2003).

this case abroad, with a significant number of publications and other communications., aimed at diplomatic audiences History is used by Papuans to set themselves apart from the nation – despite Indonesian historical counterclaims. This involves the assertion of a history that is not mutually compatible with Indonesian history.

The re-evaluation of Papuan history, particularly the (re)incorporation of Papua into Indonesia. and challenges to official discourses about history, are central to the process of 'straightening history' (*luruskan sejarah*).[152] Histories of Papua indigenous to the province have been written in ways that remove it from the nation.[153] The theologian Benny Giay's interpretation of Papuan history is that "the historical reality formulated and defended by the rulers of the nation, is essentially an orchestrated reality".[154] These Papuan reinterpretations of history are genuine and consider the necessity of reinterpreting history as a moral endeavour.[155]

However they are also instrumental, as they lend weight to Papuans seeking to challenge the current political orthodoxy. These contestations of history are also contestations of Indonesian nationality, and are "central to the struggle today".[156]

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152 This term is used to describe both a re-evaluation of the Act of Free Choice, and the recognition of R Kjar, "The Invisible Aristocrat: Benny Giay in Papuan History" (BA (Hons), Australian National University, 2002), 43.

153 Michael Cookson, "Batik Irian" (PhD., Australian National University, 2008), 54.

154 Benny Giay. "Menuju Papua Baru: Beberapa pokok pikiran sekitar Emansipasi Orang Papua". Seri Deiyai II. (Jayapura, 2001), cited in; Ibid.

155 Ibid.

156 Jennifer Robinson, "Justice for West Papua" (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney University, March 13, 2009).

A key force in the reinterpretation of this history has been Papuans involved in the OPM. As a nationalist force, they have contended that *bangsa Papua*, the Papuan nation, is something that is simultaneously a modern political creation, over and above the historic tribal configurations that have characterised New Guinea, and as a natural result of the Melanesianness of the Papuan people.[157]

Whether these concepts are the result of Dutch expressions of nationalism and understandings of the state promoted in the colonial era is not obvious. It is clear however that these ideas were not 'foreign' by the early 1980s, and by that stage they had been indigenised and made useful for the Papuan national cause, as expressed by the OPM. In footage shot for the film *One People, One Soul*, members of the OPM express these sentiments at length.[158] Interviews in this film included in-depth conversations with members of the OPM, who asserted strongly to the interviewer their right to nationhood, the nature of Papuan identity, the injustices perpetrated by the Indonesian military, and the possible shapes of a Papuan state.[159] The expression of the idea of a *bangsa* (nation) and of West Papua are both clear and direct (although among those talking, Papua, West Papua, West Irian are all used, but not interchangeably).

A focus on Papuan resistance to Indonesia became the centre of the film and its marketing when it was released in 1988. By this time the events of 1984 were no

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157 Bob Burns, *One People, One Soul (archival footage)* (National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, 1984).
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.

longer as compelling, and the cause of Papuan nationalism as conveyed by OPM members better conveyed the message of a Melanesian people under threat and fighting back. The use of resistance narratives has been common in foreign Papua movement discourses since the 1990s. Papuan resistance has been framed as survival in the face of elimination, and by foreigners as forms of resistance in the face of this overwhelming power. This resistance is particularly evident in Nonie Sharp's *Rule of the Sword*, which emphasised strongly the Biak anti-colonial and anti-Japanese *Koreri* movement.[160] This book is important as a central source for two decades, from its publication in 1977 through to the fall of Suharto. It was consistently cited as a reliable secondary source, alongside other titles in the small canon of activism (as discussed in the introduction).

In Sharp's book, resistance is presented as a force from deep within Papuan souls and outside control.

> The Dutch crash program in the last ten year of their rule (the decade of the 1950s), for the decolonisation of West New Guinea unintentionally released forces for independence that had lain dormant for quite some time. The deepest hopes of the people for freedom from alien subordination were to find expression in a public form: by 1960 they were to become articulate in the demand for a future separate from the both the Dutch and Indonesia.

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160 N. Sharp, *The Rule of the Sword: the story of West Irian.*

The past, as imagined by activists and many Papuans is of 'West Papua' as a concrete entity, the present is of subordination under the Republic of Indonesia, and the future is of a liberated 'West Papua'. In siding with the Papuan independence movement, foreign activists have also incorporated strong claims about historical difference and tied these to nationhood, such that the two concepts cannot operate independently without a difficult separation.

Hybrid histories

Many Papuans have embraced Indonesianness either partially or wholly. This is not to say that Papua is now an Indonesian land – it is currently torn between competing nationalist aspirations, and is still the subject of a strong wish by many Papuans for independence. However versions of history that have been written with the expectation of Papua ultimately leaving the Republic of Indonesia, and which have 'written out' Indonesian histories do not explain Papua's history accurately. Nationalist Papuan histories have often been represented by activists in way that obscure the use of history in ways that obscure the complex history of interaction between Papuans and inhabitants of other parts of the archipelago. This is particularly so for Papua's recent history since 1961. The history of Papua now also includes a great many from the rest of the archipelago, whose experiences and perspectives are important. Non-indigenous residents now make up at least 35% of Papua's population, of which almost half are

second generation immigrants.[161] Many of these identify as Papuan,[162] and their participation in Papua's recent history cannot be discounted. This substantial group does not fit neatly into Papuan nationalisms that are simply essentialised.

Papuan history is currently torn between two nationalisms. The first of these is an Indonesian state history which has had no desire to revisit the past except to memorialise the struggle against the Dutch[163] (and even this has waned as time has passed). This history has been utilised by the Indonesian state and its supporters to declare questions about the place of Papua within the nation resolved.[164] Against this is a Papuan history that is in many ways diametrically opposite, with its proponents determined to place the transfer of sovereignty between the Netherlands and Indonesia at the centre of Papuan history, and which considers Papua's history to be crucial in determining the present.[165]

I have not engaged here at length with these histories, or the approaches to Papuan history embedded in them. Both parallel histories are assumed to imply that the nationalist perspective associated with them is self-evident. This is not to reduce their importance – they are deserving of much greater consideration than I have been able to deal with here.

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161 Upton, "The Impact of Migration on the People of Papua, Indonesia," 461.

162 Ibid.

163 Chauvel and Bhakti, *The Papua conflict: Jakarta's perceptions and policies*, 25.

164 Indonesia. Permanent Mission to the United Nations, *The Restoration of Irian Jaya into the Republic of Indonesia* (New York. 2001).

165 J. Saltford, *The United Nations and the Indonesian takeover of West Papua,*

Conclusion

This chapter has been about the representation of the history of Papua. I have examined both portrayals made by activists, and representations made by Papuans that have then been endorsed by activists. In all these cases, the history being presented is limited, either by virtue of restrictions on the possibility of investigation, or by the fact that this history has been written in the service of nationalist aims.

Activist representations of Papuan history have been drawn from a small number of texts and trusted sources, and these have been used in cross-referential ways, such that the production of new knowledge is limited. A 'dark space' imposed by the province being strictly controlled as a military operations zone and largely closed to outside research, has meant that such discourses have circulated freely, as no plausible counter-narratives have been established in the west. As Hulme and Whitehead have said, "certain stories and stereotypes have become established through repetition".[166] One of the most frequent stories about Papua is that of genocide. While violence has been sustained at various times since the 1960s, and in some times and locations at intense levels, no research has been done that would prove or disprove these claims. Osborne in 1989 pointedly wrote that "Irian Jaya is not 'lost', nor is its culture 'obliterated'".[167] His statement was true then, and is true now; suffering in Papua is not the same as extinguishment, but it is felt in very real ways. The traumatic impact of

166 Hulme and Whitehead, *Wild Majesty,* 6.
167 Osborne, "The obliteration of a people (review)," 25.

these events is felt acutely in the present by many Papuans, and this continues to bring history to the forefront.

While Papuans themselves may not be the victims of an ongoing genocide, the Papuan nation state is under threat as a potential entity. Nationalist histories have been written to support the creation of such a state. Activists have taken these straightforwardly, and rejected notions of history that would problematise this simple nationalist history. In the absence of an ability to write history without restrictions or nationalist teleological goals, Papua's history will remain contested, political, and incomplete.

– Chapter 3 –

Exploiting Papua: natural resources and activism

Papuans have been represented as victims of resource exploitation in a number of different contexts. This chapter examines the ways in which activists have portrayed resource exploitation. It considers how the frames of biodiversity, destruction of the natural environment, and the imposition of development have been used to contextualise a number of natural resource projects, in the fishing, forestry, transmigration, and mining sectors.

Activist representations of Papua have placed emphasis on the existence of a biodiverse natural environment, and portrayed Papuans as a constituent part of this environment. Against this has been presented the imposition of development or rapid social change on unwilling Papuans. Activists have also focused on expropriations of wealth, and the enrichment of wealthy Indonesian elites. Use of these framings is not exclusive, and the most successful incorporate multiple elements.

The Freeport mine has taken a centre-stage role in activist campaigns because it contains a number of key elements that make it suitable for campaigning. The mine represents; imposition into highlands jungle and wilderness area, it provides a compelling example of high-tech development against traditional Amungme, it represents foreign capital and monetary exploitation, and it presents activists with a compelling example of power, and of cooperation between Indonesia and foreign interests.

Biotic richness

> Irian Jaya is a very special part of our planet that contains a vast wealth of natural treasures which stretch out over horizons of the most pristine environments in the world. It houses the largest continuous tracts of undisturbed lowland rainforest in all of South-East Asia, and a biotic richness and diversity that is beyond compare. The province is one of the last great unknowns of the world, a challenge to understand, a challenge to explore, a challenge to develop, and a responsibility for all to safeguard its most important areas.[168]

This quote, by Dr Ronald G. Petocz, WWF representative in Irian Jaya during the 1980s was used by the Australian West Papua Association for the purpose of

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168 R.G. Petocz, quoted in Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), *West Papua Information Kit 1998*, 16.

emphasising three things; firstly, richness in biodiversity, secondly, Papua's undisturbed nature, and thirdly a responsibility to protect. These ways of interpreting the natural environment function as frames through which to understand and represent the province, and have been used by activists in their representation of Papua.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in the 1990s made the recommendation that much of West Papua be considered for designation under a 'World Heritage' listing.[169] This recommendation for listing examined five areas of prime importance considered to have their "integrity threatened" by industrial development.[170] Dr Petocz spoke in his capacity as representative for both IUCN and WorldWide Fund for Nature (WWF), described 'one of the richest and most biologically complex assemblages of plant and animal life to be found anywhere in the world', and recommended that logging be stopped in the province.[171]

Conservationists, realising the difficulties in conserving large parts of the earth's surface, have instead chosen to focus on "hotspots" that harbour large amounts of the world's biodiversity, and places of "mega-diversity",[172] which are particularly well endowed. As a result, Papua has been ascribed a key role in preserving the world's biodiversity:

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169 Paul Chatterton, "World Heritage Recommended for West Papua," *Inside Indonesia*, no. 28. (March 1991): 35.

170 Ibid.

171 See also: Ronald Petocz and George P. Raspado, *Conservation and development in Irian Jaya: a strategy for rational resource utilization* (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1989); Ronald Petocz, "Irian Jaya: Biological resources and rationale for a comprehensive protected area design.","*Irian*, no. 13 (1985): 43-64.

172 A.L. Mack and L.E. Alonso, eds., "A biological assessment of the Wapoga River area of northwestern Irian Jaya, Indonesia," *RAP Bulletin of Biological Assessment* 1 (2000): 1.

> Irian Jaya contains half of Indonesia's total biodiversity... Indonesia now appears to be "#1" biodiversity country in the world.[173]

As a result, Conservation International has designated the island of New Guinea to be Asia's only remaining "major tropical rainforest area".[174]

Papua's portrayal as one of the richest and most biodiverse places on earth, and as an unspoiled paradise (see Chapters 1 and 2) has contributed to a focus on environmental destruction as a key element in campaigning, often as the most significant aspect. This has had the effect of romanticising Papuan lifestyles as in touch with nature, in a harmonious ecological balance. This view reflects the assumption that Papuans would adopt forms of development that worked with rather than against nature if given the chance. While these are not exclusive interpretations of development in Papua, they are widely used. Indeed, they fit well within the mainstream of environmental discourse. The widespread recognition of biodiversity as a concept was made evident by the 1998 Convention on Biological Diversity.[175] For example, Greenpeace in the 2000s attempted to rename the forests of the island of New Guinea as the "Paradise Forests" in an attempt to raise their profile.[176]

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173 Ibid., 29.

174 Ibid., 16.

175 A. Escobar, "Whose knowledge, whose nature," Biodiversity, conservation, and the political ecology of social movements. *Journal of Political Ecology* 5 (1998): 53.

176 Greenpeace International, "Paradise Forests," *Greenpeace.org*, 2009, http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/forests/asia-pacific.

Foale and Macintyre argue that "since its invention in the late 1980s, the term biodiversity has taken on a life of its own, and has in fact become politicised and sequestered by a profoundly unscientific narrative".[177] Biodiversity has a normative framing that has some correlation with indigenous viewpoints, but is not in itself equivalent to them. The codification of Papua as radically 'diverse' has not however translated into management programs that would have allowed conservation and development on Papuan terms. The presentation of Papua as "breathtakingly beautiful, rich in natural resources"[178] is problematic. It has the effect of "botanizing" or naturalising Papuans within their environment, positioning them as part of a rich ecosystem.[179] Although not campaign literature, the 1993 Australian mountaineering documentary *Ice Capped Jungle* also reflects this idea, stating that as "one of the great wilderness areas of the world, and given that we haven't got many left, a wild island like New Guinea should be left for everyone".[180] The idea of wilderness is a potent one – to refer to something as wild, such as the Mamberamo River area,[181] is to imply that it should be left alone. Here the suggestion is made explicit.

These framings can serve to remove Papuan agency as social or economic actors rather than as 'forest people', and render their adoption of forms of modernity 'inauthentic' or questionable. The designating of land as natural heritage or wilderness of

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177 Foale and Macintyre, "Green Fantasies", 2.

178 Australian West Papua Association, *West Papua: an Issue Who's Time has Come* [sic]., (Melbourne:, 2006).

179 See similar representations of the Sarawak in Borneo: J.P. Brosius, "Endangered forest, endangered people: environmentalist representations of indigenous knowledge," *Human Ecology* 25, no. 1 (1997): 47-69.

180 Chris Hilton, *The Ice Capped Jungle*, 1993.

181 Anonymous, "Mamberamo Madness: progress and resistance in West Papua," *Do or Die*, 1999. http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no8/mamber.html

international significance makes development problematic. Packaging Papuans as people of the land, and living in harmony with nature similarly ignores the significant changes Papuans have adopted on their own terms and imposed on their natural environments. Examples include the widespread and rapid adoption of sweet potato agriculture and the land clearing necessary for its practice, and the hunting and consequent extinction of a number of marsupial species before European contact.

The threat of development to biotic richness

Development and associated activities are presented against this background of biotic richness. Introduction of the types and scale of economic activities common elsewhere in Indonesia and developed countries, such as farming, forestry, mining, and fisheries, are seen to pose a threat. This development has been described by a number of activists as one of the "greatest threats to the survival of West Papuans as a distinct people".[182] This was partly a reaction to Indonesia's use of development over and against various forms of Papuan objection and resistance, and against justifications for the further Indonesianisation of the province.

During the 1970s through 1990s, policies of large scale development throughout Indonesia were central to the developmentalist and corporatist aspirations of the New

[182] AntiSlavery Society, *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise* :60

Order Government, and formed a key part of its legitimation.[183] As applied to Papua, these also accorded with the mandate of United Nations Fund for the Development of West Irian (FUNDWI), which was to bring economic development to the province.[184] International agencies such as the World Bank were also heavily supportive of the idea of developing Papua.[185] A large number of projects were planned, many involving foreign companies. Although few of these ever reached full fruition, they were a regular source of anxiety for Papuans and activists. An example of such a claim can also be found in the statement that the Trans-Irian Highway is "an enormous grave being dug by its future inhabitants".[186] The Trans-Irian Highway has been in development since the 1970s, but remains only partly completed, as a result of the significant financial and engineering challenges it presents to Indonesia,[187] and the limited return on the effort invested. The spectre of development is a particularly compelling one, when presented against illustrations of Papuans in traditional dress, nearly naked, and "living in harmony with their environment for thousands of years",[188] set in the midst of jungles and waterfalls. The introduction of development is also seen as challenging:

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183 T.M. Li, "Compromising power: Development, culture, and rule in Indonesia," *Cultural Anthropology* (1999): 300.

184 J. Timmer, "Spectres of Indonesianisation and Secession in Papua:" 26; M.T. Walker, "Development in West Irian," in Priorities in Melanesian Development: Papers Delivered at the Sixth Waigani Seminar ,(Canberra, 1972), 332.

185 M. Colchester, "Banking on disaster," *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2/3 (1986): 61-70.

186 Meiselas, *Encounters with the Dani*, 158-159.

187 Completing the highway would involve building a road across some of the highest ranges in the region, and high rainfall and thick forest further complicate the task.

188 Sam da Silva, *Raising West Papua* (Melbourne: 2003), 18.

> at least 30,000 years... of an intimate relationship with the land that is hard for people in the west to understand. Land is not just a resource for making money[189]

Implicit in this message is the idea that Papuans have something to teach the rest of the world about attitudes to the land, whether as indigenous peoples or as Papuans.

Transmigration

During the 1970s and 1980s the Indonesian Government engaged in a significant people moving project, designed to relieve the pressure of overpopulation in the central islands, and to provide opportunities for landless peasants and smallholder farmers. Known as 'Transmigration' (*transmigrasi*) the scheme took farmers from Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok to the less densely populated outer islands and interior of Sumatra and Kalimantan. With 3 people per square km, Papua (*Irian Jaya*) appeared a particularly attractive target, when compared to the 700 people per square km of Java.[190]

This scheme attracted considerable attention from activists for a number of reasons. It was funded largely by the World Bank and international donors, and was seen as

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189 Ibid.: 18

190 Mariel Otten, "'Transmigrasi': from Poverty to Bare Subsistence," *The Ecologist*, 1986, 71.

characteristic of the large 'top-down' development that the World Bank was increasingly criticised for.[191] In order to market these issues to their audiences, activists need both a "focal point" on which to apply pressure, and a relationship through which they can demonstrate the responsibility to their audience for taking action. The World Bank provided such a target. Literature that criticised the scheme gave considerable attention to the Javanese poor who were drafted into the programs.[192] These activist works highlighted the impact on farmers who were sent to isolated and often infertile and inhospitable environments.[193] Unlike the fertile soils of Java, much of Papua has comparatively poor soil, and droughts and flooding can be problems. Papua-focused activist literature however has tended to consider the impact on Papuans first and foremost, as might be expected. This was often, but not always, to the exclusion of consideration of the wellbeing of transmigrants. The failure of the transmigrants to establish themselves was seen as evidence of the failure of the Indonesian state, and suffering of the transmigrants, as evidence that the concept was not a feasible or desirable one. When accompanied with the images of abject poverty, it presented a compelling image of Indonesian state failure.

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191 See particularly: Colchester, "Banking on disaster: International support for transmigration."

192 George Monbiot, *Poisoned Arrows: an investigative journey through Indonesia* (London: 1989), 22-40; Otten, "'Transmigrasi': from Poverty to Bare Subsistence."

193 Ibid., 22-40.

This image and many like it accompany the special issue of *The Ecologist* "Banking on Disaster", p61. Similar images were used elsewhere in activist material during the 1980s and 1990s.

Photo credit: Survival International.

The transmigration scheme was described as an "assault" on the high value and respect Papuans have for the land.[194] Deforestation was often linked directly with the transmigration programs, with images of the 'dead earth' providing a compelling visual metaphor for the destruction of Papua as an entity. The imposition of transmigrants on Papua was seen by activists to ignore a 'delicate environment' and to

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194 K. Suter, *East Timor, West Papua/Irian and Indonesia* (London, 1997), 22.

place unsustainable pressure on the land.[195] While the filling of Papua with immigrants is presented as problematic in environmental and economic terms, the activity as a whole is also seen as threatening. West Papua is said to be the "serious victim" of transmigration, which has been frequently characterised as an invasion.[196] The result of these representations was to create an image in activist literature in which the very presence of outsiders was synonymous with the destruction of Papuan environments.

Forestry

Forestry has been an area of particular attention for foreign activists. This is because it has been prominent in a number of ways, which have facilitated its use in campaigning.

During the 1970s the Indonesian state invested heavily in expanding forestry projects in Papua. The exploitation of timber resources in the Asmat region drew particular attention, and was well documented and widely represented. Logging was carried out by military companies that used forced labour, and whipping, beating, and the threat of shooting.[197] The book *Plunder in Paradise* accurately describes the logging of Asmat forests as "the most infamous case of exploitation" in Papua at the time.[198] The use of

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195 Anti-Slavery Society, *West Papua: plunder in paradise*, Indigenous Peoples and Development Series Report No. 6 (London, 1990), 62.

196 M. Colchester, "The struggle for land: tribal peoples in the face of the transmigration programme," *The Ecologist*, 1986, 107.

197 Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War*, 125.

198 Anti-Slavery Society, *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise*, 74-75.

forced labour and documented conditions of the Asmat, who were already famous internationally for their carvings, meant that this case attracted considerable attention.

Forestry is also an area in which the environmental impacts of Indonesian incursions were first properly contested. Papua's forests have been seen as great storehouses of biodiversity. This accorded with popular representations of biodiversity and nature conservation which emphasised tropical rainforests. Both activist and general audience portrayals of Papua have often emphasised rainforests,[199] and this has reinforced images of many Papuan tribes as being a 'forest people'.[200]

During the late 1980s Scott Paper, through its subsidiary PT Astra-Scott planned to create significant eucalypt cellulose plantations and a large paper mill in the lands surrounding Merauke. The project was expected to use 790,000 hectares of land,[201] and represented a major incursion into Papua by a United States based company. This project had attracted the interest of Tapol, the Indonesian environmental groups SKEPHI and WALHI, and a number of student and issue-based groups which were formed to oppose the project. The project created fears that it would bring "disaster to the forest of Irian Jaya and cause serious social unrest to native Auyu tribes".[202]

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199 Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), *West Papua Information Kit 1998*, 7. "Papua New Guinea & West Papua - Tours & expedition," http://www.papuatrekking.com/; "The Untold Story: Footage from the Papuan Rainforest | WestPAN: Canada's West Papua Action Network," http://www.westpapua.ca/?q=en/node/494; Greenpeace International, "Paradise Forests"; "West Papua News - The Newsletter of West Papua Action," February 1997, http://westpapuaaction.buz.org/newsletter/no2.htm#2.

200 Peter King, *West Papua and Indonesia since Suharto* 122.

201 Tapol, "Scott Paper to Invest in Merauke," *Tapol Bulletin*, no. 91 (February 1989): 11.

202 Ibid.

After a tentative trial of 60ha, Astra-Scott withdrew from the project, as activists were successful in convincing the company to refrain from investment, with the threat of protest and consumer boycott. The Astra-Scott campaign was a significant one at the time, but its success reduced its usefulness to Papua campaigners who had sought to attract attention to the province as a whole. Astra-Scott was also exposed to the consumer and susceptible to activist pressure in ways that many other companies operating in Papua were not, with branded products sold directly to the consumer in competitive markets. This was unlike other companies, such as Freeport whose products were sold to copper processors, themselves several steps removed from the end consumer.

The Astra-Scott project would have given activists a number of opportunities to demonstrate negative impacts on Papua; expropriations of wealth from Papua to foreign multinationals and their wealthy owners, at the expense of the environment and the people of Papua. While destruction of Papuan forests has continued into the present, it has only attracted limited attention among Papua movement activists. This has been in part due to the Indonesian and Malaysian ownership of logging companies, and particularly Indonesian military companies whose ownership structures are deliberately convoluted.[203] This has presented activists difficulties in finding a clear target susceptible to protest.

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[203] C.V. Barber and K. Talbott, "The chainsaw and the gun: the role of the military in deforesting Indonesia," *War and Tropical Forests: Conservation in Areas of Armed Conflict* (2003): 153.

Fisheries

Fisheries have been an area of resource exploitation that has also attracted attention. The book *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise* related the impact that large scale Japanese and Korean operations were having on coastal fishermen, and the richness of fisheries in the Arafura Sea.[204] Similarly *West Papua: the Obliteration of a People* mentions these issues within the same framework.[205] Robin Osborne mentions briefly the caution Ron Crocombe offered to Indonesian planners to share the benefits of coastal fisheries with their traditional owners.[206] Overfishing of coastal stocks, and the difficulties encountered by Papuans in developing commercial fisheries, have been ongoing problems.[207]

Fisheries however were absent from sections on resource exploitation in *Let Them Be* and the *West Papua Information Kit* ,[208] despite the focus of both on natural resources, was well as the section of *West Papua and Indonesia since Suharto* on resources and the Indonesian military.[209] This pattern continues over a number of other activist materials where the issue is mentioned at most incidentally.[210] It is absent in most other

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204 Anti-Slavery Society, *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise*, 76.

205 Budiardjo and Liong, *West Papua: the Obliteration of a People*, 41-42.

206 Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War*, 117., citing Ron Crocombe, in Ron Crocombe and Ahmed Ali, (eds) *Politics in Melanesia*, University of the South Pacific, Suva 1982

207 Pers. comm., Musa Sombuk, 20th June 2009.

208 Breen, *Let Them Be: West Papua Revisited*, 16.;Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), *West Papua Information Kit 1998*, 9-18.

209 King, *West Papua and Indonesia since Suharto*, 113-134.

210 For example, the issue is noted incidentally in the 1986 special issue of *The Ecologist* focused on transmigration and Papua; M. Colchester, "The Rape of West Papua," *The Ecologist*, 1986, 102.

materials mentioning resource issues, including those written by Papuans, nor was it raised in any of my interviews, which indicates that it has not been a driving issue.

Fishing is not easily compatible with a vision of the Papuans as a forest-based people. This viewpoint reduces the focus on coastal-based communities who relate to the sea and islands. The neglect of coastal communities in activist considerations of Papua may explain why fisheries have not been a significant area of concern. Fisheries also do not deliver the same type of images of destruction that are often central to those writing about environmental issues,[211] in comparison to mining, forestry, and transmigration programs. Furthermore, while the industry saw considerable participation from outsiders, particularly Japanese and Malaysian and Thai companies, it lacks the connections with large Australian, British, and American companies that have made other issues more compelling for activists.

History of exploitation

Issues relating to the exploitation of resources in Papua have been presented by activists in ways that emphasise the exploitation of Papuans. These have been consistent with dominant representations of Papuan indigeneity that present them as both native to the land and as victims who are vulnerable to intrusions. This view has also been instrumental in determining how issues of resource use have been

[211] J. Seppänen and E. Väliverronen, "Visualizing biodiversity: the role of photographs in environmental discourse," *Science as Culture* 12, no. 1 (2003): 61.

represented. Rather than showing Indonesia's continued incorporation of the territory into the nation as an act of nation building, activists have tended to describe the taking of resources and presented economic projects as acts of exploitation. This emphasis has been a key way of understanding Papua while negating or bypassing acknowledgement of a sincere Indonesian nationalist desire to retain Papua as an integral part of the nation.

This contrast between Indonesia's position on Papua and that held by activists is seen clearly in *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise:*

> Why do Indonesians take so much trouble to keep West Papua when they are so clearly unwanted? The answer is two-fold: natural resources and territory.[212]

This instrumentalist view of how Indonesia considers the territory has been a common theme in the activist literature. Earlier works, particularly those in the 1960s, placed little emphasis on Papua's natural resources, focussing instead on the nationalist motive for Indonesia's takeover. However, as Papua was developed economically in the 1960s and 1970s the idea that Indonesian economic exploitation was the motive behind control of the territory became widespread. Nonie Sharp in 1977 described the development of resources as providing a "new reason" for sustained Indonesian incorporation of the nation.

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212 Anti-Slavery Society, *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise*, 61.

This representation continues into the present. My respondents have expressed the centrality of resource extraction to the Papua conflict, and how the Freeport mine shapes every aspect of the country's struggle against Indonesia. This is not an uncommon view. In a document entitled *Standing Up for West Papua*, a section entitled: "Why does Indonesia Want West Papua?" explains this viewpoint:

> West Papua is a land of unbelievable wealth. It has extensive mineral deposits including nickel, gold and copper as well as oil, natural gas, valuable tropical timber and fisheries. Whilst a potent combination of colonial history and nationalism motivated Indonesia's initial push into West Papua, the continued occupation is significantly sustained by the abundance of natural resources and the high levels of wealth this generates for Indonesian and international corporate, government and military elite.[213]

The issue of Papuan control of Papuan resources underpins many of the arguments made by activists. The book *Plunder in Paradise* raised the point that "the people are not given any choice as to whether or not they want the infrastructure or the company on their lands".[214] However the issue of rights to resources is not often expressed in and of itself. It is instead expressed at particular targets, such as transmigration, or

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[213] Jason MacLeod, *Standing Up for West Papua: How Australia profits from an illegal and brutal occupation and what you can do about it.* (Sydney, 2003), http://www.freewestpapua.org/docs/standing%20up%20for%20west%20papua%20-%20booklet.pdf.

[214] Anti-Slavery Society, *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise*, 73.

Freeport. The issue of indigenous rights to land is found incidentally across the activist literature across most resource issues. However, land rights have not been given significant prominence, and have not been taken up as a campaign issue. This is a significant difference from a number of other indigenous rights movements, such as those in New Zealand and Canada, where the assertion of land rights has assumed a central role.

Mining activism as a coherent category for activists.

Mining has also provided an especially useful platform for Papua activists. As an issue it expresses a number of key themes used in the representation of resource use in Papua. It shows Papuans as the victims of development, particularly large scale resource development, and contrasts this against a portrayal of Papuans as indigenous people with a strong relationship with the land.

While Papua activism has been largely insular, it has taken limited inspiration from elsewhere. One key example of this has been the campaign against the Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea. This campaign attracted international attention and was relatively successful. The Ok Tedi precedent offered Papua activists the following: it was a resource campaign working with local indigenous people; who were affected by significant environmental effects; against British and Australian based multinationals; and successfully saw the filing of lawsuits in foreign courts against companies

involved.[215] On the basis of all these elements it provided a coherent framework with which to challenge Freeport.

There is a tendency among some Papua activists to read the present into the past. This is particularly obvious in discussions and portrayals of the Freeport mine. This mine is a located near the summit of Papua's highest peak, Puncak Jaya. Owned and run by PT Freeport Indonesia - a subsidiary of Louisiana-based Freeport McMoRan (hereafter Freeport refers to both entities, unless otherwise specified), it is the richest copper and gold mine in the world, and a large and potent revenue earner for Indonesia. Freeport is frequently referred to as the largest single taxpayer in Indonesia. As a result it can be difficult to appreciate that the mine held much lower prominence until the 1980s, when the Grasberg deposit was discovered and operations expanded considerably.[216]

Although the Freeport mining operation was the largest industrial project in the province, its operations were limited in a relative sense until the late 1980s. The development of Grasberg and subsequent expansion of mining operations meant that Freeport became by far the largest foreign company in Papua. These operations represented a very considerable capital investment. Initial investment in the mid-to-late 1960s could not have happened without the certainty provided by the Suharto regime. The development of the Grasberg Mine during the late 1980s was an even larger undertaking and required an investment of billions of dollars. During the 1980s the

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215 S. Kirsch, *Reverse Anthropology: Indigenous Analysis of Social and Environmental Relations in New Guinea* (Palo Alto, California, 2006), 15-24.

216 George A. Mealey, *Grasberg: Mining the Richest and Most Remote Deposit of Copper and Gold in the World, in the Mountains of Irian Jaya, Indonesia* (New Orleans, Louisiana, 1996), 18.

mine was compared unfavourably to the Bougainville Panguna and Ok Tedi mines in Papua New Guinea, on the basis of a lack of compensation for loss of land and amenities, poor wages for Papuans, and a lack of ongoing employment opportunities.[217]

Papua's Freeport mine has served to provide what McCarthy has described as a 'demonstration effect'[218], acting as a beacon of technology, power, and wealth in the midst of poverty. Since the end of the Suharto New Order, the mine has been a flashpoint for demonstrations within Papua, and has been the subject of a prominent rallying cry among Papuans. It has also made Papuans more confident of the economic viability of their province as an independent nation.[219] Activists frequently emphasise the vast scale of the Freeport mine and the concentration of technology deployed at the mine.[220]

The very significant investment in the development of mines and their associated industry also make them apparent to activists as a sign of economic injustice due to the visible concentration of capital involved.[221] This is particularly so for those with strongly left-wing political beliefs. While the West Papua movement attracts activists from across the political spectrum, left-wing activists are prominent in a number of the key organisations.[222]

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217 Anti-Slavery Society, *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise*, 73.

218 John F. McCarthy, "The demonstration effect: Natural resources, ethnonationalism and the Aceh conflict," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 28, no. 3 (2007): 315-317.

219 This is significant to Papuan independence campaigners because arguments have been made against the economic viability of Papua as an independent nation. See for example; R. Chauvel, "Australia's Strategic Environment: The Problem of Papua," *Agenda* 11, no. 1 (2004): 41.

220 Ben Bohane, Jim Elmslie, and Liz Thompson, *West Papua: follow the Morning Star*, 13.

221 Elmslie, *Irian Jaya Under the Gun,* 143-159.

222 For example, Maire Leadbetter, who has involved herself in many left-related movements.

"Freeport mine from the air, one of the world's largest mining operation, grinding down the mountains of West Papua."

Photo credit: Jim Elmslie, *Follow the Morning Star,* p11

Anti-Freeport activism

In early 1995 a report was published that greatly increased the profile of the Freeport mine, and brought it to international attention. Entitled *Trouble at Freeport*,[223] this report was released by the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) on behalf of unnamed activists in Papua. This report changed things significantly, by making public the mine, and creating a strong public perception that the company was at least partly responsible for the actions of the military in the surrounding area.

While the report thrust Freeport's operations into the spotlight, background work had already been done by students at the University of Texas. These students had formed

223 Anonymous (prepared for publication by Pat Walsh), *Trouble At Freeport.*

an issue network after Freeport had commissioned the university to research on its behalf in the early 1990s and had fought Austin environmentalists over property development.[224] These connections Freeport had with the University of Texas were again leveraged in 1995, when the network was revived. These students researched, prepared backgrounders and briefing documents, and developed arguments that could be readily used. As a result activists and journalists internationally were able to disseminate information quickly and widely. By late 1995, the perception of Freeport being in an indefensible position was sufficiently entrenched that the *Inside Indonesia* issue on the subject was entitled "Freeport Under Siege".[225]

The *Trouble at the Mine* report detailed allegations of violence and serious human rights abuses committed by members of the Indonesian military, and the use of Freeport resources for this purpose. This brought to the forefront an association between Freeport and military violence. This association was not an entirely new idea. A 1977 attack by OPM members on a slurry pipeline from the mine and subsequent retaliation by the Indonesian military had been well reported in *Obliteration of a People*,[226] and this incident was widely reproduced elsewhere. The allegations in the report were sufficiently damaging that they prompted Freeport to address their critics.[227] *Trouble at the Mine* also generated a wave of activism on Papua. The Freeport mine also maintained a clear link in the minds of activists with military force, and associated human rights abuses. This issue again came to the forefront with the

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224 "Students urge Cunningham to cut ties to Barton Creek developers," *Austin American-Statesman*, July 25, 1990.

225 "Freeport Under Siege: A Special Report," *Inside Indonesia*, December 1995.

226 Budiardjo and Liong, *West Papua: the Obliteration of a People*, 35.

227 Denise Leith, "Freeport's troubled future," *Inside Indonesia*, no. 67 (2001): 10-11.

2003 revelation that PT Freeport Indonesia had paid upwards of $11 million to Indonesian security forces in 2000 and 2001, including large direct payments to generals.[228] This revelation was widely reported in the international media. The issue appeared again in 2005, when a *New York Times* investigation reported evidence of Freeport's involvement in payments to Indonesian military officials.[229] This (re)appearance of complicity with the Indonesian security apparatus has helped to ensure that an activist 'focus on Freeport' remained. Some activists have gone as far as to interpret Freeport's mining operations as a significant incursion of a genocidal power into the province.[230]

The linking of violence in Papua to foreign investment gave impetus to a fresh wave of activism during the 1990s. New and experienced Papua activists were able to tap into existing currents of discourse about Indonesia which presented a:

> stable image of Indonesia... a military dominated government... exercising repression to ensure the political stability necessary to attract foreign investment, corrupt and ruthless in the treatment of the population of annexed lands.[231]

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228 Human Rights Watch, *Too High a Price: The Human Rights Cost of the Indonesian Military's Economic Activities* (New York: 2006), 48-56, http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2006/06/20/too-high-price.

229 Jane Perlez and Raymond Bonner, "Below a Mountain of Wealth, a River of Waste," *New York Times*, December 27, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/27/international/asia/27gold.html.

230 Eco-Action, "Freeport McMoRan: Committing Genocide in West Papua" (Eco-Action, 2005), 2, http://www.eco-action.org/ssp/freeport_wpapua.pdf.2

231 Max Lane, *Voices of dissent in Indonesia* (Melbourne:, 1982), 16.

The prevailing understanding of the Papua issue as a state-corporate alliance in opposition to Papuans continued into the post-New Order period. Papua movement activist relations with the Indonesian state remained characterised in the form of popular resistance against a repressive state supported by transnational investment and capital. The investment of the British mining giant Rio Tinto into the Freeport mine in 1995 gave activists an expanded base from which to attack the mine, as a result of Rio Tinto's presence around the world, and a corresponding and established activist network.[232] The company had offices, mines, and stock listings in a number of developed countries. The stock listings enabled activists to restart engagement with shareholders and engage in shareholder activism. In a prominent example, activists unsuccessfully attempted to take Amungme leader Yosepha Alomang to Rio Tinto's London shareholder meeting in 1998, but Alomang was barred from leaving Papua.[233]

By 1998 the Freeport mine had widespread attention, attracting a front page story on the *Wall Street Journal*.[234] The 'Freeport issue' become significant in its scope, and was now no longer something that could be ignored. It was an issue in public discourse, a concern among the business community, and a point of contention in the United States – Indonesia relationship. This also meant that it took on much greater significance for Papuans and the activist community itself. The mine was a central issue for discussions about Papua in the decade between the mid-1990s and late-2000s.

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232 See: R. Moody, *The Gulliver file: mines, people, and land: a global battleground* (London, 1992).

233 D. Leith, *The Politics of Power: Freeport in Suharto's Indonesia* (Honolulu:, 2002), 237.

234 Peter Waldman, "How Suharto's Circle and a Mining Firm Did So Well Together," *Wall Street Journal* (September 1998)., cited in SH Ali, *Mining, the environment, and indigenous development conflicts* (Tucson:, 2003) : 39

This was seen with the 1998 publication from the Australian West Papua Association entitled *West Papua Information Kit: with Focus on Freeport*. The issue was the primary focus of the publication. The mine became the central site in Papua in foreign imaginations, and was vital to how Papua was understood and represented geopolitically, economically, and socially, as a focus of activist criticism of Indonesia in Papua.

The mine currently contributes over 50% of Papua's Gross Domestic Product, and makes up about 90% of its exports.[235] These percentages are likely to decline somewhat as other major projects such as the Bintuni Bay LNG field come to full production, but it is very likely that Freeport's mining operations will continue to be the largest single economic activity in the province for some time. Despite its importance throughout the 1990s and 2000s, attention to the Freeport mine has subsided. The Australian West Papua Association's 17 page briefing document circulated to politicians in 2009 did not mention either Freeport or its mining operations, the subject of mining, or natural resources once.[236] This omission signals that by the late 2000s the issue had lost its compelling nature, or was no longer seen as effective. Indonesian responses to criticism have also hampered activism. Ballard and

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235 C. Ballard and G. Banks, "Between a rock and a hard place: Corporate strategy at the Freeport mine in Papua 2001-2006," in *Working with Nature against Poverty: Development, Resources and the Environment in Eastern Indonesia*, ed. Frank Jotzo and Budy P Resosudarmo (Singapore: , 2009), 149.

236 Australian West Papua Association (Sydney). *West Papua: It cannot be ignored*. Sydney, 2009. (unpublished, emailed by activist)

Banks write that access to the mine and information about its operations have been increasingly constrained since the late 1990s.[237]

Beanal and the Amungme

> Beanal asked the crowd of about 50, which included two television and three newspaper reporters, "From all the mining, what do we get? Humiliation. Torture. Hostages. Killing. They ask us to leave our land. They've taken away our tradition and our culture. We've become alienated in our own land."
>
> Beanal said his tribe has been working to address the situation for a long time. "During the last 30 years, we tried to find justice, but we never found it. And now comes Mr. Martin [Regan] and I can see justice. I come here to ask for justice." [238]

The case of Tom Beanal was attractive to activists. He was educated, articulate, and a leader among Amungme. He was thought of as somebody who could stand up for his community in the face of the overwhelming force of Freeport, and the various parts of the Indonesian state it had close links to, which included the security forces and

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237 Ballard and Banks, "Between a rock and a hard place" 147.

238 Robert Bryce, "Tribal Leader, Freeport Land in Court," *Austin Chronicle*, May 31, 1996, http://inquirer.gn.apc.org/BeanalvsFreeport.html.

Suharto, and key figures within the US establishment. Beanal was seen as a compelling individual.

Tom Beanal gained early credence through his work with WALHI (*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*), the Indonesian environmental organisation affiliated with Friends of the Earth. The early 1990s saw the rise of environmental issues, exemplified by the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. This period also saw increased attention to people defined as indigenous, and their rights to land and traditional practices and lifestyles, with a number of United Nations agencies and transnational organisations "articulating the legitimacy of minority rights".[239] This indigeneity has been emphasised by activists, to demonstrate a close relationship with nature. The sacredness of the mountain Puncak Jaya is frequently noted,[240] with emphasis on its place within Amungme cosmology.[241]

These factors, and increased attention paid to Freeport after the *Trouble at the Mine* report, meant that Beanal was strongly positioned to receive and direct attention towards his campaign. Beanal came into the public eye in 1996 when he commenced a lawsuit against Freeport in the United States. In materials before 1996 he is almost absent in activist literature on Freeport, and complaints on behalf of the Amungme

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239 Warren and Jackson, *Indigenous movements,* 8.

240 See; Eco-Action, "Freeport McMoRan: Committing Genocide in West Papua."

241 "This usurpation of indigenous land is particularly harsh in view of Amungme cosmology, which regards the most significant of its female earth spirits, Tu Ni Me Ni, as embodied in the surrounding landscape. Her head is in the mountains, her breasts and womb in the valleys, and the rivers are her milk. To the Amungme, Freeport's mining activities are killing their mother and polluting the milk on which they depend for sustenance -- literally and spiritually. In addition, mountains are the home to which the spirits of Amungme ancestors go following death": Abigail Abrash Walton, *Mining a sacred land* (New York, Spring 2004).

take on a generalised tone rather than citing specific grievances. For example in the 1995 Freeport themed special issue of *Inside Indonesia*, Beanal is not mentioned once.

Despite the best efforts of Beanal and his legal and support team, the US lawsuit failed, and Beanal returned to Papua. At this stage legal avenues had been largely exhausted and international solidarity did not promise to yield concrete outcomes. Beanal made a decision to form a strategic partnership with Freeport rather than continue a strategy of antagonistic relations that had until this point been unsuccessful. Beanal said "People see me as working with Freeport now. Perhaps it's true! Nevertheless, in the depths of my heart, I feel that I must do what is best for my people."[242] The agreement with Freeport also delivered a much more reliable source of income than the small projects and other forms of aid and development that were otherwise available. It was a reminder that it was not possible to 'eat nature'. The agreement was described cautiously as either "simply a pragmatic move... or a fatal error of judgement that will neutralise his ability to represent Amungme and Papuan interests in the future".[243]

It is possible to see this as a practical move. However it has not been interpreted as such by international activists. Freeport had been built up in the minds of activists to encapsulate all that was wrong with Suharto's Indonesia. Cooperation with Freeport

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242 G.R. Evans, J. Goodman, and N. Lansbury, *Moving mountains: Communities confront mining and globalization* (London, 2002), 63.

243 C. Ballard, "Tom Beanal: This community leader won his spurs through conflict with Freeport," *Inside Indonesia* 97 (2001): 12.

placed Beanal and the Amungme he represented squarely in that camp, and this move was seen as naïve cooption or as selling out for a source of steady income.

The activist focus on Beanal and Amungme was to the detriment of the neighbouring Kamoro people, who were also affected heavily by the operations of Freeport. This singular focus came about in large part due to the rejection of the Kamoro by WALHI as unsuitable for their campaign, particularly when compared to "the strength and unity of the Amungme tribe [which] have made them ideal partners of the NGOs opposed to the company".[244]

Denise Leith describes how after Lemasa (the Amungme Tribal Council) became a dialogue partner with Freeport, a tension arose with the objectives of environmental NGOs, particularly WALHI. Because the focus of Beanal and Lemasa shifted away from environmental campaigns, and they no longer expressed significant open antagonism towards Freeport, it was difficult for these organisations to continue to utilise them for their causes.

The introduction of funds into the community also drove conflict between groups of Amungme, partly because the funds were not directed with particular insight.[245] It is in this context that Yosepha Alomang and her organisation YAMAHAK (*Yayasan HAM Anti Kekerasan*, Foundation for Human Rights and Anti-Violence) rose in stature as alternative voices among activists. Alomang was given the Yap Thiam Hien Award for

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244 Leith, *The Politics of Power*, 130.

245 Leith, "Freeport's troubled future," 10-11.

human rights in 1999, and then feted as "the winner of the world's top environmental prize", on receiving the Goldman Environmental Prize.[246] Her antagonism towards the Indonesian state was prominent, both in her statements,[247] and in activist portrayals of Alomang. The struggle against Freeport was framed by Alomang as a struggle for rights and dignity:

> What do they think the Amungme are? Human? Half-human? Or not human at all? If we were seen as human . . . they would not take the most valued property of the Amungme, just as we have never wanted to take the property of others.... I sometimes wonder, whose actions are more primitive?[248]

This antagonism between Amungme and Freeport has continued to be highlighted by activists.[249]

As a result of his shift in focus, and the emergence of a alternative spokesperson for Amungme, Beanal was no longer useful to the activist campaigns. As a consequence he was rejected as an authentic representative of his people:

> As a result of Beanal's seeming defection to "the enemy", the NGOs have turned their attention to Alomang, raising her profile and giving her training in monitoring human rights.[250]

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246 Agung Rulianto, "Goldman Winner," *Tempo* (May 1, 2001): 14.
247 Ibid.
248 Abigail Abrash Walton, *Mining a sacred land*,
249 Ibid.

This abandonment occurred despite suggestions that Beanal was using Freeport's support to fund the independence movement through the Papua Presidium council.[251] Later articles in the prominent activist newsletter *Tapol Bulletin* made much more comprehensive reference to Alomang and YAMAHAK.

Rather than accepting as genuine Beanal's change of position from that of a fierce critic to a collaborator with Freeport, or at least as a strategic move in the face of limited options, critics took a much harsher view. His shift has been seen as evidence of Freeport's aggressive and often intimidating responses to critics,[252] and willingness to spend large amounts to defend its much larger investments. In many ways Beanal's change in position continued to be difficult for activists to understand, with Beanal in 1999 making strong statements against Freeport as chairman of Lemasa, describing the "devastating impact" of mining, and linking the mine to Indonesian violence.[253]

Papuans have not been passive recipients of Freeport's actions, however. The formation of the Tongoi Papua union representing indigenous Papuan employees of the company has seen Papuans being successful in negotiations with the company to provide better pay and conditions.[254] Their use of a four-day strike as a negotiating tactic in April 2007 was however an act that may not have been possible even a few

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250 Leith, *The Politics of Power*, 138.
251 Ibid., 246.
252 Ballard and Banks, "Between a rock and a hard place" 154.
253 Tapol, "Dialogue in West Papua Faces Obstruction," *Tapol Bulletin*, no. 151 (March 1999).
254 Tongoi Papua union delegates (in translation), *Paths to Justice and Prosperity*, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney University, Sydney, August 2007

years previously because of the threat of violence. By 2006 the focus of international attention against Freeport had shifted away from Amungme and Kamoro and onto Papua as a whole. Freeport was now seen as a justice issue for the province.[255] The mine was seen by activists as a source of income that would make an independent Papua economically viable. This coincided with greater levels of activism across Papua focusing on the mine, and the idea that its wealth belonged to all Papuans. The "demonstration effect" of the Freeport mine as a "capital-intensive, highly lucrative, extractive natural resource [that] presents itself as an advanced industrial enclave within the local domain and plays into other grievances among wider populations"[256] had by this stage spread across Papua. Its presence tapped into a rich sense of grievance among Papuans.

Conclusions

Resource exploitation has been central in activist discourses about Papua. It has been a key area in which to delegitimise the presence of the Indonesian state. Activists have sought to do this by emphasising a number of ideas.

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255 Tapol, "Papuans confront Freeport," *Tapol Bulletin*, no. 182 (April 2006): 1-3.

256 McCarthy, "The demonstration effect: Natural resources, ethnonationalism and the Aceh conflict," 317.

The first has been stressing the biodiversity and environmental value of Papua, and emphasising the place of Papuans within this environment. Development has been presented by activists as a threat to Papua, with a focus on the destruction of its natural environment. Papuans have been portrayed as having been harmed by this activity, while the benefits have flowed overwhelmingly to Indonesians and multi-national corporations.

A number of areas of resource development have been used to express these ideas. Forestry and transmigration have provided activists with potent illustrations of the impact of development on the land, and on traditional Papuan lifestyles. However, other areas such as fisheries have been less easy to exploit in this way, as they do not provide the same visual representation of destruction.

Mining has been particularly useful, as it encapsulates many elements strongly. With the need for great investments in capital, the large scars that it leaves on the land, the scale and extent of the technology involved, and the flow of wealth from the land to a small number of owners, it presents a compelling image of development which offers few benefits to Papuans and threatens considerable harm. The Freeport mine took centre stage in activist campaigns from the mid-1990s because it symbolised all of these issues. Additionally, its association with violence committed by the Indonesian military made it a compelling target for activist campaigns.

All of these representations seek to stress the place of Papuans as victims of resource use. However, many of the considerable problems that have resulted from these industries do not arise from the industries themselves, but from the ways in which Papuans have been excluded from the management, development and benefits of these activities. Papuans are not homogenous in their views on development, and activist portrayals that have presented Papuans in this way are incomplete. This is illustrated by the case of Tom Beanal, whose reluctant engagement with Freeport was ignored and rejected by activists as inauthentic. While some Papuans consider resource development as an outside imposition that is harmful to their ways of life, others have engaged with it and instead seek to obtain some of the benefits. The essentialisation of Papuans circumscribes their agency, and limits the ways in which they can interact with development and continue to garner the support of international activists. While there have been good reasons for rejecting Freeport and other companies as partners in Papuan development, there are also compelling reasons why Papuans may engage, particularly if this engagement is on their terms, or terms that allow them to negotiate. This was seen in 2007 when the union Tonggoi Papua took on Freeport for improved wages and conditions, and successfully achieved their aims.

Papuan engagement with modernity is not unproblematic, and cannot be while Papuans maintain a range of discrete lifestyles, practices, and modes of thought that cannot easily be assimilated to Indonesian or Western interpretations of modernity. Active rejection of these has been seen openly at various points in recent Papuan history, with student activists since the mid 2000s frequently asking for the shutdown

of Freeport – preferring to remain poor rather than as subjects of exploitation. Nevertheless, such drastic choices are not inevitable ones, and the possibility of engagement with a range of possible worlds remains an open one.

– Chapter 4 –

Poverty and sickness as rights issues

Despite a focus on human rights by West Papua advocacy organisations, rights relating to health and poverty have received comparatively little attention. In this chapter I argue that these rights have not been a significant focus of attention because they are not easily utilised in the service of West Papuan nationalism, nor do they fit within a number of other key framings used by activists. The first of these relates to how the Indonesian Government has been considered. It is seen as the principal source of problems for Papuans rather than as a potential facilitator of solutions, with Indonesia's state as a largely unitary and military actor rather than as a rights facilitator. Secondly, rights issues that surround health and poverty do not fit easily with an understanding of Papuans as people living traditional lifestyles, and the corresponding rejection of the imposition of development by a state with a developmentalist ideology. The geographically distributed location of health and poverty issues, and the lack of clear protagonists in these issues mean that they are not often suitable for use in activist campaigning.

Furthermore, economic and social rights have been marginalised in foreign activist representations because they often defy spectacular representation. Unlike

environmental destruction, military engagement, or killings and other violence, much within the realm of economic and social rights does not as readily lend itself to visual commoditisation. Disease and neglect are very often suffered within the body. While poverty suffered within urban environments cause a blight on romantic assumptions about Papuan life, poverty in largely rural settings is often viewed simply as traditional life.

It has also been the case that this category of rights has until recently not been accorded high priority by human rights organisations, who have often considered them as resisting clear definitions and difficult to defend.[257] Their reluctance to embrace 'positive rights' (rights that enjoin the state to take particular actions rather than refraining from action) has meant that organisations defending Papuan rights have not promoted these issues, except insofar as they are seen to visibly affect the bodily integrity of Papuans (e.g. HIV/AIDS, starvation) or contribute to activist representations of Papuan suffering under Indonesian rule.

Forms of knowledge of health, among activists and Papuans.

257 See, Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch; K. Roth, "Defending Economic Social and Cultural Rights: Practical Issues Faced by an International Human Rights Organization," *Human Rights Quarterly.* 26 (2004): 74.

Just as official denials and censorship serve to place limits on discourse, and to render forms of knowledge as literally 'unthinkable' for most,[258] so too activist discourses serve to frame events in such a way as to place certain ideas and possibilities outside the realm of relevant knowledge. The restriction of discourse and knowledge within Indonesia's New Order period was maintained through official denials and censorship, including the imprisonment of writers and control of the press. Forms of speech considered subversive (*makar*) put the speaker at risk of violence, imprisonment, and death. In this section, I look at how this violence has created another discursive space which directly challenges official notions about disease.

Foucault suggests that all forms of power are ultimately manifested in their effects on the body.[259] Working from this proposition, the effects of military and political power in Papua, might be viewed not only in terms of violence and political control, but also in poverty and disease. Public healthcare has been neglected in Papua for several decades. The neglect has become particularly apparent as much of the rest of Indonesia has developed.[260] The lack of attention to healthcare is also evident in the rates of child mortality in Papua, which are high by both national and international standards.[261] High levels of malaria infection, tuberculosis, malnutrition, and diarrhoea affect the province. Despite work by the Indonesian state and various outside agencies including:

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258 Compare with widespread ignorance within Indonesia regarding the mass violence in anti-communist purges of the 1960s; Armando Siahaan, "The Forgotten History of 1965," *Jakarta Globe*, June 30, 2009, http://thejakartaglobe.com/news/scholars-say-islamic-groups-complicit-in-1965-slaughter/313095.

259 Michel Foucault, *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France, 1973-1974*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York, 2008), 57.

260 Kate Napthali, "Healthcare in Irian Jaya: the diagnosis is not good," *Inside Indonesia* (December 1994): 11-13.

261 Tapol, "Papuan Churches: Special Autonomy has failed," *Tapol Bulletin*, no. 187 (2007), http://tapol.gn.apc.org/bulletin/2007/Bull187.htm#top.

missionaries, Médécins Sans Frontiers, UNICEF, the UNDP, and others, problems in health, particularly in remote communities, remain considerable.[262]

HIV/AIDS remains a major problem, and as it is seen as a disease with the possibility of spreading and killing large numbers, it has received more attention than any other disease affecting Papua. It is estimated by AusAID that the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in West Papua is 1.03%, compared with an average of elsewhere in 0.17% in Indonesia.[263] This discrepancy is a cause of concern, and frequently forms the basis for charges by activists of significant neglect of the disease by the Indonesian Government.

However, the use of HIV/AIDS in campaigning by foreign activists has been isolated from other health issues. At Papua movement meetings I attended between 2006 and 2008 HIV/AIDS was mentioned by activists as a spectre haunting Papua, but tended to be raised in isolation from other questions of healthcare. It was also raised with reference to ideas of demographic swamping and genocide – as a harbinger of a 'silent genocide'.

While foreign and Papuan activists have sought to link Papuan deaths to the Indonesian state, they have not always done so in ways that emphasise neglect over

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262 S.J. Rees et al., "Health and human security in West Papua," *The Medical journal of Australia* 189, no. 11-12: 641; S. Rees and D. Silove, "Speaking out about human rights and health in West Papua," *The Lancet* 370, no. 9588 (2007): 637-639.

263 L. Butt, G. Numbery, and J. Morin, "The smokescreen of culture: AIDS and the indigenous in Papua, Indonesia," *Pacific Health Dialog* 9, no. 2 (2002): 283-289.., AusAID. *HIV/AIDS activities by country* (2007). http://www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/hivaids/countries., cited in Rees and Silove, "Speaking out about human rights and health in West Papua."

other forms of culpability. For this reason and others, the subject of health in Papua, and particularly the HIV/AIDS 'epidemic' has been politically sensitive. However it has not necessarily been politically charged and inseparable from political meanings, as it has often been depoliticised as a 'health' issue. An example of this was seen when the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's '*Foreign Correspondent*' featured a program on HIV/AIDS in Papua, and introduced the segment with an explanation detailing the difficulties in negotiating a visa.[264] The subject matter lay close enough to questions about the treatment and neglect of Papuans to be highly sensitive. However the issue was sufficiently medicalised, with solutions framed within the Indonesian state (such as Indonesia's AIDS commission) as to be acceptable to Indonesia and to fulfil the terms under which the journalists' visas had been negotiated.

Genocide and other circulated discourses

The introduction of HIV through fishermen and prostitutes in the 1990s has been considered by Agus Alua, chairman of the Papuan People's Assembly (*Majelis Rakyat Papua),* to be deliberate, and an act of genocide perpetrated by the military.[265] These sentiments are widespread among Papuans, including among elites. [266] This view was raised at a meeting in 2006 by Socratez Sofnan Yoman, the head of the Baptist Church in Papua, who stated that Indonesia's practices had the combined effect of

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264 Australian Broadcasting Corporation "Papua in Peril" (Sydney 1st April 2008).

265 Ibid.

266 Leslie Butt, "Silence Speaks Volumes: Elite Responses to AIDS in Highlands Papua," in *Making Sense of AIDS: Culture, Sexuality and Power in Melanesia*, ed. Leslie Butt and Richard Eves (Honolulu:, 2008), 119.

genocide.[267] This interpretation was problematic to Maire Leadbeater of the Indonesian Human Rights Committee (IHRC), who preferred to state that genocide was a possibility, rather than a definite outcome. This act, of distancing herself from the claim while keeping it within reach, has been common among foreign advocates. A similar approach was adopted in the "Yale report" on genocide (see below),[268] which took tentative conclusions providing sufficient space for advocates to present either position. Leslie Butt has stated that

> Papuan theories about sex work, infection, and genocide contain explicit political claims about their relationship to the Indonesian state, claims that are presented in the form of reasoned political analysis[269]

The *Foreign Correspondent* program was ultimately able to resolve this tension by presenting HIV/AIDS as a medical problem,[270] and as a problem of Papua to be solved within the framework of the Indonesian state and its partners in development, such as UNAIDS, AusAID, and USAID, as a matter to be considered "within country development goals".[271] This institutionalisation within the "AIDS Industry"[272] can have the effect of further removing Papuans from control over how the disease is dealt with.

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267 Socratez Sofnan Yoman, "Report on West Papua" (Wellington,, August 16, 2006).

268 Elizabeth Brundige et al., "Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control," April 2004, http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Intellectual_Life/West_Papua_final_report.pdf.

269 L. Butt, "" Lipstick Girls" and" Fallen Women": AIDS and Conspiratorial Thinking in Papua, Indonesia," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2005): 413..

270 Australian Broadcasting Corporation "Papua in Peril.",

271 Butt, "Silence Speaks Volumes: Elite Responses to AIDS in Highlands Papua," 122-124.

272 D. Altman, "Globalization and the 'AIDS industry '," *Contemporary Politics* 4, no. 3 (1998): 233-245, cited in Butt, "Silence Speaks Volumes: Elite Responses to AIDS in Highlands Papua," 123.

Although Papuan input into these programs is being received, and is considered vital,[273] the distance between Papuan elites and much of the population is significant, even where these elites have an ambiguous relationship with the Indonesian state.[274]

Allegations of conspiracy have not only circulated among Papuans, however. The unpublished illustrated book *Erasing a People*, created by the Canadian group West Papua Action Network (WestPAN) characterised the spread of HIV/AIDS in the following way:

> West Papua has the highest HIV rate in Indonesia [...] AIDS was first detected in the province in 1992. Studies by international researchers report that brothels established and run by the Indonesian military are a principal source of the deadly disease. Also, it is repeatedly alleged that the military is relocating HIV-infected prostitutes from other parts of the Indonesia islands to Papua. This has become a cheap and effective way to deal with infected prostitutes while helping to eliminate the Papuan population. Men who visit the army's brothels often return home and infect the women in their villages.[275]

In this excerpt HIV/AIDS is militarised, rather than medicalised, and construed as a problem that stems ultimately from the Indonesian state. Even if the disease is now

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273 Australian Broadcasting Corporation "Papua in Peril.",.

274 Butt, "Silence Speaks Volumes: Elite Responses to AIDS in Highlands Papua," 118-122, 131.

275 Tom Bendetti, *Erasing a People: Unheard Voices from an Unknown Country (West Papua)*, Draft. (West Papua Action Network (WestPAN) Canada, 2007), http://www.westpapua.ca/files/video/ERASING_A_PEOPLE_Draft_v6.pdf. [accessed 13th August 2009, no longer accessible online]

considered by some activists to be moving from its sources (military run brothels), the blame can still be assigned directly to Indonesia. A fictionalised voice-over presents this nexus between the military and disease clearly:

> VOICE: [Rachel] "Two of my aunts became pregnant after they were raped by soldiers. One of them was so ashamed, she stopped eating and died. The other was forced to become a prostitute in the city, giving her money to the Indonesian army pimps just to stay alive. We heard she died of AIDS."[276] [277]

Similarly in this work, neglect in prevention and funding for treatment is also characterised in terms of deliberate acts against Papuans.

A much older Papuan health problem illustrates the trajectory of a rumour, and how parallel medical discourses can bypass the political context in which these rumours exist. Cysticercosis is a disease affecting the brain which is transmitted through parasitic tapeworms. It first emerged in Papua among the Ekari in the Paniai Lakes district in 1971, following the introduction of tapeworm carrying pigs from Bali. The subsequent gradual spread of the disease to other parts of Papua, including highlands Jayawijaya District, has meant that the disease has become a serious health issue throughout Papua.

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276 Ibid.

277 The book consists of a fictionalised narrative, spoken in first person by "Rachel", "Jacob", and "Benny". The author states: "I have based much of the dialogue spoken by the characters in this book on actual interviews with West Papuans. Some sources are documented eye-witness accounts, and many are direct quotes from filmed interviews. (See the list of documentaries at the end of this book.) Some dialogue is just for story, but all facts can be verified, many by U.S. state documents." Ibid.

The pigs were given to Papuans by the military, at the suggestion of Suharto as softeners to a population who were at best ambivalent about the Indonesian presence in their territory.[278] The introduction of infected pigs from locations where the parasite is endemic to where the disease was not known was soon a significant cause of ill health and death among the indigenous Ekari. Questions about the possibility of intent to infect were raised as a result of the obvious connection between the disease and the military. Other connections were drawn from its spread among Christians rather than Muslims. This was due both to transmission through pigs and dogs and the eating of pork, and the reduced susceptibility of immigrants due to their different hygiene practices. This claim was intensified by the presence of transmigrants from elsewhere who sought to settle in the Paniai Lakes, providing a visible motive for the claim.[279]

Tom Hyndman described the disease as a method of counterinsurgency in research described in 1983 by Tapol,[280] and repeated the claim in a number of papers. By the late 1980s his research had been given further publicity by Cultural Survival in their journal *Cultural Survival Quarterly*,[281] and Hyndman was explicit in his claim that the disease was a component of biological warfare.

The reproduction of these claims in *West Papua: the Obliteration of a People* has meant that they have had much greater currency and wider distribution than they

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278 Budiardjo and Liong, *West Papua: The Obliteration of a People*, 58-60.

279 Ibid.

280 Ibid.

281 D. Hyndman, "How the West (Papua) Was Won: Cysticercosis and Indonesian Counter-Insurgency in a Continuing Fourth World War," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 11, no. 4: 8-13.

would otherwise have had. The book's status as one of the few human rights related documents to emerge on the subject of Papua during the 1970s and 1980s has meant that when historical claims are examined, the claims contained within it have been treated as possible evidence. Such a use is found in Brundidge et al., *Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control,*[282] a document produced by students of the Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School. This document was prepared by students, but has since found much wider circulation as a compilation of evidence of possible genocide. The Brundidge et al. document makes no comment on the status of the claims, except to replicate them as they are found in *Obliteration of a People.* It is also found on the website of Yale University's genocide program,[283] where together with *Obliteration of a People*, an article by Survival International, and a small number of generalised webpages and books, it is presented as reason for Papua's inclusion in this program.[284]

Through its republication by Hyndman in academic papers, and repeated mention in West Papua advocacy materials, this rumour has been delocalised and stripped of the context in which it arose. It now forms part of a global circulation of claims about genocide in Papua. There has been an absence of research which would connect or

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[282] Brundige et al., "Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control."

[283] "Papua (Indonesia)," *Genocide Studies Program Yale University*, http://www.yale.edu/gsp/papua/index.html.

[284] *Papua, Indonesia* (New Haven, Connecticut: Genocide Studies Program, Yale University, 2004).When I enquired with the director of Yale's genocide program for further context for his statement about the possibility of ongoing genocide in West Papua I was directed to this page. (see; Adams, Phillip. "Late Night Live: Ben Kiernan." ABC Radio National, August 4, 2009. http://www.abc.net.au/rn/latenightlive/stories/2009/2645780.htm.)

disconnect claims about Indonesia's use of military power to medical issues such as cysticercosis and HIV/AIDS, in large part caused by Indonesia's reluctance to allow such research within its territory. As a consequence, these claims will continue to circulate as fact, unchallenged, unverified, and unexplored.

HIV/AIDS has been a major concern of a number of activists working on Papua for years, and has played into their fears of the Papuan population slipping into a terminal decline. At a 2006 meeting of Papua activists I attended, participants named the issue as a major priority for their campaigns, and pledged to raise it with their governments.[285] By focussing on cysticercosis and then later HIV/AIDS as single issues, however, this advocacy often fails to locate the disease within a larger framework of Papuan disempowerment in health. This marginalisation is widespread and systematic. The effects of this disempowerment are described by Butt and Munro as an environment in which "practices and values that do not fit the mould of modern 'progress' are considered deviant and 'backwardness' is experienced as shameful".[286] There is a lack of an ability to manage health services in ways that empower Papuans culturally and to take care of their own health. This is a symptom of wider disempowerment from the Indonesian state, and from local structures of power which designate Papuan practices (and by extension, Papuans), as 'undeveloped', 'immoral', and 'improper'.[287]

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285 *Sixth International Solidarity Meeting on West Papua* (Lake Cowichan, British Columbia, Canada, 2006).

286 Butt and Munro, "Rebel girls? Unplanned pregnancy and colonialism in highlands Papua, Indonesia," 588.

287 Ibid.

Poverty in the activist literature.

Poverty within Papua has also been associated by activists with Indonesia's presence. It has formed a backdrop of injustice and marginalisation of Papuans. However, it has not been a central theme in representations of Papua, and poverty resulting from a lack of development has not been emphasised.

Papuan social and economic rights received greater attention after the fall of the New Order, with the implementation of the 2001 Special Autonomy law. Introduced as a response to Papuan demands for independence, it provided a degree of self-determination and a much greater share of state revenues. However, it has not been fully implemented, nor has it been without its critics. Special Autonomy has been widely criticised as failing in providing meaningful economic change and in fulfilling Papuan political aspirations. Here, as elsewhere, criticism of the legislation has been a way of further delegitimising Indonesia's presence.

A 2007 article in *Tapol Bulletin* reported two documents produced by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).[288] These were located in the article alongside a report signed by the leaders of the Catholic and Protestant Churches in Papua. The report of the churches claims the existence of secret documents produced by the military and intelligence services in 2000 and 2003, which outline the Special

[288] United Nations Development Program, *Harmonization of Human Development Programme and Donor Contribution in Papua* (Jakarta: United Nations Development Program (UNDP), February 2007); Tapol, "Papuan Churches: Special Autonomy has failed."

Autonomy legislation as part of a plan to destroy popular support for the independence movement.

The spread of rumour is described by Kirsch as a symptom of violence, which shapes how forms of suffering, including ostensibly non-violent forms of action by the Indonesian state, are made intelligible in West Papua.[289] Such rumours also have the purpose of rationalising forms of suffering such as extreme poverty, torture, and disease that otherwise seem irrational or inexplicable.[290]

While the provenance and authenticity of the secret documents referred to is unclear, they have assumed considerable significance. A large number of rumours circulate within and about West Papua, by word of mouth, increasingly in print, and since the late 1990s on the internet. The use of 'secret' documents that 'prove' particular events or strategies is widespread, and I have received a number of these, circulated on email lists.[291]

What these rumours do in the context of the Tapol article is to underscore the view that the present social and political environment in West Papua is unchanged from the New Order, and that in their words, "the democracy experienced by the Papuan people is a

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289 S. Kirsch, "Rumour and Other Narratives of Political Violence in West Papua," *Critique of Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (2002): 57-63.

290 D. Fassin, "The embodied past. From paranoid style to politics of memory in South Africa," *Social Anthropology* 16, no. 3 (2008): 317.

291 Discussion about unproven events and strategies against Papuans is common on a number of email lists, particularly among Papuans themselves. The *Komunitas Papua* email list regularly features such discussions.

fake, based on violence, terror and intimidation...".[292] This expression of the relationship between Papuans and the Indonesian state is used later in the Tapol article to contextualise claims in the church report that Indonesian presence in West Papua amounts to systematic genocide.

The article also used a report of the UNDP to examine the material conditions of Papuans. Tapol's characterisation of poverty in Papua presented a stark dichotomy; Papuans sitting on banana leaves on the roadside selling produce alongside immigrant owned shops and businesses, and a very high rate of maternal and infant mortality. These were then placed these alongside open-ended questions about whether Indonesia's actions constituted genocide.[293]

Poverty in Papua has been interpreted as the result of marginalisation by Indonesia. This has been portrayed in a number of ways, all of which have illustrated a 'dual economy' in which Papuans have been disempowered economically. The emphasis in these representations is not on economic development however, but on how Indonesia is responsible for this poverty.

Severe poverty is graphically illustrated in the October 2001 issue of *Tok Blong Pasifik*, with a photomontage that includes men breaking rocks by hand, and women sitting by the roadside selling betel nut.[294] A similar image of Papuans in poverty was again presented in 2006, when the human rights organisation Witness created a film to

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292 Tapol, "Papuan Churches: Special Autonomy has failed."
293 Ibid.
294 Rob Huibers, "West Papua," *Tok Blong Pasifik* 55, no. 2 (October 2001): 16-17.

highlight economic injustice in Papua. The film was produced with the help of the Human Rights Office of the Catholic Church in Jayapura, and featured interviews with church rights officers and women roadside sellers.[295] This image recurred in the presentations given by Socratez Yoman. At a 2006 presentation to the Indonesian Human Rights Commission, Maire Leadbeater commented on how the images shown demonstrated literally the marginalisation of Papuans in the economy.[296]

The development during the 1970 of dual economy in Papua was noted by Nonie Sharp in *Rule of the Sword*, as a formal economy emerged with limited Papuan participation. Sharp's portrayal described how Papuan activity was limited to basic manual labour. She described Papuan marginalisation from the economy:

> Today Papuans do not occupy the high or even most of the medium positions; increasingly Indonesians are filling even the most unskilled jobs.
>
> For West Papuans the effect of the migration is one of total exclusion from the economy; only migrants are eligible for jobs of any sort. This I have termed a *caste barrier*; it is one based on racial/ethnic criteria.[297]

This representation of Papuan exclusion sought to highlight how Indonesia's presence was one of exploitation, and that development had not brought significant material

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295 SKP Jayapura, *Mama-Mama Marginalized in Their Own Land: The Story of Papuan Women | The Hub* (Witness, 2007), http://hub.witness.org/fr/node/7902.

296 Maire Leadbeater, Wellington 28th August 2006.

297 N. Sharp, *The rule of the sword:* 31.

benefits to Papuans. Similarly, the *West Papua Information Kit* highlighted how the development of tourism during the 1990s did not bring material benefits to Papuans. Rather than being operators or workers within this industry, they were treated as "objects of curiosity", indigenous people to be looked at as examples of 'culture' and were excluded from the income derived.[298]

Hunger and starvation

In 1997-1998 West Papua was heavily affected by a strong El Niño event (El Niño Southern Oscillation, ENSO), which had the effect of causing significant drought and associated weather changes. The drought was a factor in the burning of over a million hectares of forest in Papua,[299] and was the cause of shortages of food and other essential items in Wamena and other towns.[300] The impact of the drought on subsistence farmers was particularly acute, depriving them of their staple food sources and exposing them to severe malnutrition. Boissière described the impact on the Yali village of Holuwon, within Jayawijaya district. He wrote that it as presented at a high level on a famine scale, with;

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298 Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), *West Papua Information Kit: revised 1998 with focus on Freeport*, 25.

299 M. Boissière, "The impact of drought and humanitarian aid on a Yali village in West Papua, Indonesia," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 43, no. 3 (2002): 293.

300 Ibid.

> no food in the gardens, only 'famine foods' being eaten... little or no water available locally... disease more prevalent.... children or old people in danger of dying[301]

Lack of water was a major problem, with many streams and rivers drying up completely.[302] This not only had severe direct health effects, but also further spread disease among populations weakened by malnutrition.[303] After around six months of severe drought, international aid was organised and delivered.

Poverty was linked to the military in a number of activist articles about the famine. Although this famine was precipitated by a very strong El Niño climate pattern, the famine also had significant human factors. A *Tapol Bulletin* article entitled *Military Blamed as Thousands Die of Hunger* described the forced migration of Papuans from their villages in the highlands to lowlands which were less affected. The article quoted an unnamed ICRC official who said that in a large number of villages approximately 15% of the population were dying from starvation and malnourishment.[304] The article also claimed that the effect of population movements was to expose the Papuans to malaria that were unprotected from, and as a result precipitated further deaths. The official also claimed that the removal of villagers was designed to empty the highlands to allow companies associated with the military to exploit timber and other

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301 Ibid., 297.
302 Ibid.
303 Ibid., 298.
304 "Military Blamed as Thousands Die of Hunger," *Tapol Bulletin*, no. 146 (April 1998): 21.

resources.[305] The combined effect of the drought and movement was said to be "almost genocidal in scale". In this portrayal, the negligence of the state was used together with the violence of the military to create an environment in which Papuans are victimised in quite deliberate and significant ways. Further linking of poverty with militarisation in this article can be seen in the statement "they are staring down the gun barrel of development gone out of control".[306]

Conclusion

Activist representations of economic and health rights cover an area that is often difficult for Papua activists. These are troublesome, not because they are not clear or obvious, but because it is difficult to utilise them to state that Papuan independence would see the delivery of these rights. Rather than being the fault of direct intervention by the Indonesian state, these rights may fall more squarely into a category which implies neglect of Papuans. The degree to which a state has duty of care to its citizens is open to contest, but it is common among activists to assume that a minimum degree of provision of health, education, and other basic services is required of a modern state. Solutions that require further intervention by the Indonesian state are problematic. A further complication for this line of advocacy is that it has contains possibility of imposing demands on the bureaucratic state, and turning demands about

305 Ibid.
306 Ibid.

somewhat abstract rights into specific demands for treatments and actions. While this is not in itself completely without complications , rights demands have a much stronger political rhetorical power. Where these rights have been used, it is where a clear or implied connection to the Indonesian state can be demonstrated. This is particularly so where the Indonesian military has been involved. By asserting the harm caused by Indonesia, foreign activists give further weight to claims that Indonesia's presence is harmful, and that Papua should be independent.

What all of these examples used in this chapter share is their relationship to Indonesian power over the province, and the inability of Papuans to define their own economic destiny and their own forms of political expression. In short, Papuans have lived in a situation where power was used over and against them, and were essentially treated as subjects in their own land, particularly in the highlands and particularly before the 1990s.

Agus Alua has characterised the collective memory of suffering as *memoria passionis*. This widely used concept encompasses the idea of embodied suffering, a "collective memory" resulting from a history of human rights violations and domination by alien cultures.[307] The power exerted against Papuans has been regulatory and instructive, and while Papua remained a 'military operations zone', or DOM (*daerah operasi militer*), the power to define the limits of Papuan lives operated within militarily defined boundaries.

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[307] Alua, Agus, Interview with Brigham Golden, 2003, cited in, Meiselas, *Encounters with the Dani: Stories from the Baliem Valley*, 188.

Leslie Butt argues in a response to Kim critics that depoliticised medicine in Papua is not a possibility. She argues that the universalist humanitarian impulse embodied in organisations such as Partners in Health and Médécins Sans Frontiers fails to take into account the conflict over sovereignty in Papua.[308] She is right, in that the provision of this medicine without reference to politics does not create new political arrangements, but merely treats health within an ongoing framework of inequality of power and poverty. It is important to recognise the politicisation of poverty, sickness and other forms of embodied suffering in Papua. However, the contested introduction of the state into this realm should not prevent a focus on these rights in and of themselves. Activist portrayals of these rights have tended to stress their political implications, and have not been addressed at solutions. They have stressed that the current state of economic and social rights is a result of the presence of Indonesia into Papua, and have resisted challenging these issues in other ways.

308 L Butt, "Reply to Alec Irwin, Joyce Millen, Jim Kim, John Gershman, Brooke G. Schoepf, and Paul Farmer," *Medical Anthropology* 21, no. 1 (2002): 31-33.

– Conclusion –

Representing Papua from the outside

This thesis has described the ways in which Papuans have been represented by the foreign activist movement. These activist interpretations of the territory have then been distributed to the outside world in various forms, which have been replicated, reconsumed and reinforced. This process of intensification of particular ideas has been important in generating foreign understandings of Papua, both within the activist movement, and among the general public.

In preparing my thesis I have examined a large number of activist documents and publications. What has struck me when examining these portrayals of Papua, is their collective coherence. This is not to say that these discourses are not uncomplicated, or simple – they often incorporate large amounts of information from disparate sources. However, as representations they tend to be singular in their purpose. In their assertion of a particular way of seeing Papua, activists have stressed readings of events and interpretations of the territory that reinforce ideas about the difference between Papuans and Indonesians, and the suffering that has ensued from Indonesia's incorporation of Papua. These forms of description have been coherent in and of themselves – in ways which present Papua such that it could not be interpreted

otherwise. The Australian West Papua Association's *West Papua Information Kit*[309] displays such a coherence, presenting an Papuans as an indigenous people who are the victims of violence, resource exploitation, poverty and ill-health, and who are engaged in active resistance. As a work, its parts fit together clearly and effectively.

However, this internal consistency comes at the price of engaging with other ways of seeing the territory. Papua has been considered from a wide range of other perspectives, including those used by development agencies, foreign ministries, businesses, and in Indonesian internal politics. Each of these has interpreted Papua in its own way. Foreign activists have rejected as depoliticised the discourses within which intergovernmental, development, and health agencies operate, as they do not engage with the independence movement, nor do they challenge the sovereignty of Indonesia over Papua. Their positions have also limited their operations to tasks that are seen as non-threatening to Indonesia's authority in Papua, and most have had their permission to operate limited or cancelled where they are seen to cross these boundaries. For example, the scrupulously neutral International Committee of the Red Cross had its longstanding Papua office closed in 2009 as a result of visits to political prisoners and investigation of reports of ill-treatment and torture.[310] The forms of depoliticised engagement within which these organisations operate are seen as inadequate in understanding the way in which suffering is created and perpetuated within Papua.

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309 Australian West Papua Association (Sydney), *West Papua Information Kit 1998*

310 Sunanda Creagh, "Indonesia orders ICRC out of Papua over jail visits," *Reuters*, April 22, 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/homepageCrisis/idUSJAK434532._CH_.2400.

Activists have gone further in rejecting engagement with the diplomatic community, and with those who advocate a future for Papua within Indonesia. This competing discourse is incompatible with that of most Papua activists. Importantly, this group is seen as ill-informed about Papuan and lacking serious engagement with Papuans or their conditions. The strong support of the members of the diplomatic establishment for Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor before 1999 has left an enduring legacy of suspicion, and they have been viewed as callous or indifferent to the fate of Papuans.[311] This division is between two groups. One side exist those who hold the view that support for Indonesia "worsen[s] the security environment in West Papua... confirming the military's impunity for their corrupt and brutal [behaviour; and proves] that the Papuan is automatically entitled to the rights of independence".[312] Overtures towards dialog by members of this group on Papua have been seen as insincere. This has closed off an important opportunity for dialogue, even if it is under terms that are immediately unfavourable to the foreign activist movement, and keeps the question of independence off the table. At a seminar I attended at the ANU in 2007 I was given a book by Dino Kusnadi, the spokesperson for the Indonesian Embassy. The book was a copy of *Pitfalls of Papua* by Rodd McGibbon,[313] published by the highly influential Lowy Institute. He suggested that although I might not necessarily agree with all that was written in the book, he considered it a fair analysis of the politics and problems of

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311 For example, the publications of the influential foreign policy think-tank International Crisis Group have been interpreted in this manner. Speaking of the appointment of its head, Dr Gareth Evans to a UN Genocide Panel, an activist commented "This is the man that specifically acted as Australian Foreign Minister to cover up any references to Indonesian military brutality during the 80's and 90's, and toasted over the Timor Gap while the Timorese were dying." Anonymous, "Satire is not dead? - Gareth Evans Appointed to UN Genocide Panel [reg.westpapua email list]," May 6, 2006.

312 F. Kalidjernih,.(2008) 'Australian Indonesia-specialists and debates on West Papua: Implications for Australia-Indonesia relations', Australian Journal of International Affairs, 62: 1, pp81-84

313 R. McGibbon, *Pitfalls of Papua: Understanding the Conflict and its Place in Australia-Indonesia Relations* (Sydney:, 2006).

Papua, and a useful guide to understanding the territory. This attempt by Indonesia to interact with and influence discourse among those talking about Papua has not been reflected in similar attempts by activists at outreach to those unconvinced by their arguments, as they are often considered to hold bad faith positions.

This limitation on acceptable discourse has taken place against the context of very real Papuan suffering and desires for independence on the one hand, and a narrow 'realist' interpretation of Indonesian, Australian, and other states' interests on the other. It has also been informed by the relationships that foreign activists have had with their Papuan interlocutors in Australia and elsewhere. These Papuans have served to interpret Papua in a number of ways. The first of these has been to make it intelligible to largely Anglophone activists. While there are and have been a number of activists who speak Indonesian fluently, there are many who do not, particularly in Australia and North America. Recent converts to the Papuan cause, or former East Timor activists are represented in this group, as are some who have simply never been able to acquire the language. Given the interpretative nature of these Papuan gatekeepers, the information they provide is both important to activists and seen as acquiring legitimacy through its endorsement. The purpose of Papuan interpretation is to cement knowledge already known or claimed to be true, and to resolve potentially conflicting information. One incident during my research is emblematic of this relationship. At the 2008 meeting of the Australian West Papua Association, one member asserted, "We will consult the Papuans", on an important and divisive matter. A different activist with a

particularly sceptical perspective asked; "Which Papuans? I can go back to my city and find a bunch of Papuans with an entirely different perspective on this matter".[314]

Attempts to speak for all Papuans, or to find leaders that can do so, undermine the very real heterogeneity among the Papuan independence movement both in Papua and abroad. Outside of the limited circumstances surrounding the Papuan Council in 2000, such a clear leadership has been difficult to find. Papuans in leadership positions within Papua have had ambivalent relationships with the state. While they have often been privately in favour of Papuan independence, or greater Papuan empowerment in their relationship with Indonesia , their public positions and reluctance to champion the cause mean they have not been particularly useful to foreign supporters of independence. Theys Eluay, official leader of the *Presidium*, and vocal independence advocate, was such a leader, and his death confirmed him in foreign activist circles as a threat to the state. Neither have activists had the benefit of large Papuan expatriot communities, with clusters in the Netherlands forming the largest coherent groupings. In the absence of such stability, foreign activists have struggled to maintain a coherent relationship with "Papua", instead taking positions which favour small factions vying for control of the Papuan movement.[315]

In navigating this field I have tried to avoid representing Papua in ways that dismiss either the very real suffering that has occurred, or the considerable antipathy felt

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[314] "5th National Gathering, Australian West Papua Association" 13th - 14th September 2008

[315] An in-depth examination of these relationships was outside the scope of this thesis research, and remains unexamined in the academic literature. The observations above pertain particularly to the period 2004-2010.

towards Indonesia by many Papuans. However, I believe that in understanding Papua, a sympathy with the oppressed does not incur the need to adopt all of their positions and interpretations. I have also made an effort not to replicate either "'victimology' that caricatures [...] as the somewhat pathetic objects of colonialism, racism, oppression, poverty, patriarchy and capitalism; and the converse of this the 'rah rah' approach which makes romantic, celebratory and teleological assumptions about black [...] consciousness and struggle".[316] Representations of Papua by foreign activists have utilised elements of both. In a sincere attempt to portray Papuans as victims of Indonesia's presence, activists have emphasised those features of the situation in Papua that increase their 'worthiness' as victims.

The ways in which Papua has been portrayed by foreign activists are not inevitable, but instead have shifted, in line with expectations of what Papua should represent. For example, between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, activists shifted away from frequent utilisation of illustrations of armed OPM members as representative of Papuan resistance.

316 Belinda Bozzoli, "Interviewing the Women of Phokeng," in Fassin, *When Bodies Remember: Experiences and Politics of AIDS in South Africa*.

An image of the Jakob Prai faction of the OPM, taken by David Bradbury in 1977.[317]

These militant icons, redolent of armed struggle in Central America and Africa during the 1950s & 1960s, were de-emphasised in favour of representations that emphasised Papuans in their environment and as indigenous people, and largely omitted armed resistance. This was concurrent with the collapse of the Soviet Union and a broad delegitimisation of armed resistance movements, and the rapid emergence of the environmental and indigenous movements as recognised currents in international affairs. This shift exchanged violence for victimhood, in ways that were likely to maintain international support.

Establishing Papuans as a clearly defined group, separate to Indonesians, has been a key strategy in creating a coherent view of Papua, and in establishing Papuans as victims. Without a clear notion of Papua as a separate entity, Papuans would be 'merely' one amongst a range of other indigenous Indonesian groups.

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317 David Bradbury, "Rumble in the Jungle," *The Bulletin*, November 7, 2007.

Activists have invoked a series of clear and serious threats against Papuans. By defining Papua as one of the world's most important and biodiverse environments, and presenting the threat of its pollution and destruction, activists make a case that is compelling and difficult to ignore. Since the 1990s this has been a key element of activist campaigns, and has continued despite the waning of Freeport as a target.

The strongest claim presented by the Papua movement to their audiences is that of continued violence, and of genocide. By drawing on these, foreign activists place very strong claims on the observer. These claims have often failed to be adequately substantiated, but lack of access to the province which would verify or disconfirm these claims is itself considered by many to be compelling evidence of a conspiracy to hide the true facts about Papua. The threat of HIV/AIDS has been utilised in similar ways. Its physical impact on Papuans, in ways that are cause harm and widespread death, are seen as evidence of Indonesia's disregard or even active hostility to Papuan wellbeing.

Papua currently faces considerable problems. In human development terms it ranks well below that of Indonesia as a whole, itself a poor nation. Poverty, endemic sickness, a lack of economic development, and constraints on full and free political expression mean that the situation in Papua gives real and genuine causes for concern, and deserves attention from outsiders. The Papuan situation has been generated by structural factors which have alienated Papuans from power, often in quite severe and

violent ways. The introduction of the Special Autonomy law in 2001 was held out as an act that would "maintain [Papua] under the umbrella of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia by respecting equality and diversity"[318] and give greater power to Papuans, and in doing so help resolve the problems of Papua. By some measures it has done so, with the large majority of Papua's elected officials and public service now being composed of indigenous Papuans. However, at an underlying level it has not resolved the conflict. Papua is not securely part of Indonesia. This is demonstrated by the fact that so many indigenous Papuans feel strongly about the subject of independence, and by the obvious insecurity felt by the Indonesian Government towards this movement and the small amount of support it attracts internationally.

In understanding the foreign activist movement for Papua, it is worth going back to examine and question "how the political conditions constitutive of the truth claims [are] formulated"[319] In her response to the problem of how HIV/AIDS has been understood by Papuans, Leslie Butt addressed discourses that circulate within Papua about the state of the nation not as a direct representation of the truth, but as an understanding of the truth. Claims about reality about Papua have not been established in ways that are uncontested in all domains. Rather, a foreign activist discourse about Papua has become established and represented in works and ideas that are seen by this movement as authentic and reliable. Among the foreign activists I have studied, the idea that Papua should be independent predominates, on the basis that Indonesia is the

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318 A. Sumule, "Swimming Against the Current: The Drafting of the Special Autonomy Bill for the Province of Papua and Its Passage through the National Parliament of Indonesia," *The Journal of Pacific History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 355.

319 Butt, "" Lipstick Girls" and" Fallen Women": AIDS and Conspiratorial Thinking in Papua, Indonesia," 414.

source of significant historical and ongoing harm against Papuans. A very firm belief exists that this independence is the priority, and that until it is enacted all other problems will continue.

Activist claims have served the function of establishing and filling out knowledge about Papua into a coherent picture. However, in their representation of Papua, activists have presented a picture that is necessarily incomplete, as a result of an imposed lack of access and thus lack of direct interaction with Papua, and their need to present Papua to the world in compelling and straightforward ways.

The limited conditions under which knowledge is produced have served to constrain interpretations of Papua among activists, and allow unproven notions to continue unchallenged. This situation could be rectified in a number of ways. Firstly, there is a need for members of the foreign Papua activist movement to engage more widely, and take on board criticism and critique from outside their movement. Activists must address their lack of substantive engagement with others, particularly those who do not share their vision of independence but are working to improve Papuan wellbeing. If they are to advocate strongly for Papuans, they require both a high quality of information, and arguments that are robust in the face of criticism. The Indonesian Government has contributed to the current 'dark space' that exists in the minds of foreigners. Much of this is deliberate: investigations of past human rights abuses have the capacity to further undermine the legitimacy of the state among Papuans, and damage it abroad. However, while these historic issues remain unaddressed they are

not considered as elements of the past, but firmly in the present. The effective closure of Papua to most outsiders has also contributed to negative foreign understandings of the territory. Papua is not paradise, but neither is it a place of genocide and disaster – the reality is between these two extremes. While it remains off limits to activists, it will continue to be the subject of such descriptions.

Appendices

Organisations addressed in this research[320]

Australian West Papua Association, Adelaide

Australian West Papua Association, Brisbane (defunct)

Australian West Papua Association, Canberra

Australian West Papua Association, Melbourne

Australian West Papua Association, Sydney

Down to Earth [United Kingdom]

East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN) [United States]

Free West Papua Campaign [Oxford, United Kingdom]

friends of Peoples Close to Nature interCultural (fPcN), [International]

Indonesian Human Rights Committee [New Zealand]

International Lawyers for West Papua

International Parliamentarians for West Papua

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320 This list is not exhaustive of organisations who have given attention to Papuan issues. Such a list would include such organisations as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, who take no position on Papuan independence. Their influence is considered in this study, but they are not specific sites of research.

Pacific People's Partnership [Canada]

Peace Movement Aotearoa [New Zealand]

Survival International (SI) [International]

Tapol: the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign [United Kingdom].

West Papua Action [Ireland]

West Papua Action Network (WestPAN) [Canada]

West Papua Project – Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney University [Australia]

Interviews[321]

Interviews were undertaken with a range of present and former activists in the West Papua movement. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic many activists were not willing to talk on the record, and this list includes only formal interviews.

Interviewee 1. Australian based activist, in person interview 13th September 2008

Interviewee 2. Australian based activist, in person interview 14th September 2008

Interviewee 3. Australian based activist, in person interview 14th September 2008

Interviewee 4. Canada based activist, telephone interview 10th September 2008

Interviewee 5. Canada based activist, telephone interview 12th September 2008

[321] As per requirements imposed on this research by the Australian National University's Human Ethics Committee, I have refrained from identifying these research subjects. Interviewee information was provided under signed content -release forms specifying non-identification.

Interviewee 6. New Zealand based activist, in person interview 14th December 2008

Interviewee 7. Netherlands based activist, telephone interview 1st September 2008

Interviewee 8. United Kingdom based activist, telephone interview 31st August 2008

Interviewee 9. United Kingdom based activist, telephone interview 4th September 2008

Interview 10. United States based activist, telephone interview 14th October2008

Interview 11. United States based activist, telephone interview 15th September 2008

Interview 12. Indonesia based activist, telephone interview 5th September 2008

Mailing lists

"reg.westpapua" <reg.westpapua@lists.riseup.net>

Asia Pacific Solidarity Network <apsnnewsupdates@yahoogroups.com>

Free West Papua Campaign [AWPA Sydney]
<freewestpapuacampaign@lists.riseup.net>

Indonesia Act <indonesia-act@igc.topica.com>

Indonesian Human Rights Campaign NZ (IHRC NZ)
<IHRC-NZ@yahoogroups.com >

Komunitas Papua <Komunitas_Papua@yahoogroups.com>

Tapol <tapol@gn.apc.org>

Tribal Melanesia <tribal-melanesia@lists.riseup.net>

West Papua Action Network (WestPAN)

West Papua Media Alerts <west_papua_media_alerts@lists.riseup.net>

Meetings

"4th International Solidarity Meeting for West Papua" 25th - 27th September 2006 Lake Cowichan, British Columbia, Canada

"5th National Gathering, Australian West Papua Association" 13th - 14th September 2008

"Paths to Justice and Prosperity",9th-10th August 2007, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

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